



The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council



The Honourable Jason Kenney
Premier of Alberta
3rd Floor, Legislature Building
100800 – 97 Avenue N.W.
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2B6
premier@gov.ab.ca

Dear Premier Kenney,

On November 7, 2019 a letter was sent to you on behalf of the Alberta Mackenzie Catholic Women's League Provincial Council expressing our disappointment in consolidating the Office of the Seniors Advocate into the Alberta Health Advocates Office. In the letter we mentioned that we had petitioned the previous government to amend the Alberta Health Act to ensure that the Seniors Advocate is an officer of the Legislature and therefore independent, similar to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate. We also mentioned that population demographics indicate that there will be an ever-increasing demand for "senior specific" services and it must be acknowledged that seniors' issues are not only health care issues.

You referred our letter to Minister Pon for a response.

On December 19, 2019 we received her response. She mentioned that "as nearly one-third of inquiries to the OSA are about health care and health-related supports, combining the OSA with the Alberta Health Advocates Office will address the various concerns raised by seniors, and ensure continued efficiency and expertise to respond to concerns and provide services to Alberta seniors and their families, as previously done under the Office of the Seniors Advocate."

On February 24, 2020 we meet with Minister LaGrange and representatives from other ministries to discuss provincially related Catholic Women's League resolutions passed at our conventions, specifically: dental care K-12; obesity, inter-provincial protocols for children in the welfare system and the Seniors Advocate, as we felt a mistake was being made to lump seniors issues with health care issues.

Fast forward to today. No one could have predicted COVID-19 and it's devastating effects especially on the senior population in seniors' homes. Collectively Albertans are appalled. The messages Albertans are hearing from health and government officials are ones that encourage us to protect our most vulnerable population. One way that seniors can protect themselves is to self isolate but in self isolation they need to know who they can turn to with their various concerns such as food, transportation, money and housing issues. Not all seniors' concerns are medical as indicated by the lack of care in some senior's residences.

Citizens of Alberta are being encouraged to help seniors anyway they can, and we believe the government should do its part in its area of expertise - legislation.

We feel if the government is serious about “this most vulnerable population,” be it health care or other related issues a **Senior’s Act** will be forth coming. We look forward to an **Act** that would protect the interests of seniors and would be applied to private and publically funded institutions, home care services and medical services. We believe that a Senior’s Advocate in his/her own independent office should be included in the Act so that Albertans can access a person who knows the issues of seniors and can help them navigate the system.

On behalf of all the members of the Alberta Mackenzie Catholic Women’s League Provincial Council we thank you for all you have done in this time of COVID crisis. We look forward to a Senior’s Act that would demonstrate the seriousness of the government in protecting its Seniors.

Judy Look
ABMK Provincial President
Catholic Women’s League of Canada
abmkprovpres@gmail.com

“This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.