



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



April 03, 2017
Honourable Lori Sigurdson,
Minister of Seniors and Housing
seniors.minister@gov.ab.ca

Dear Minister Sigurdson,

It has been almost a year (April 12, 2016) since representatives from our Alberta Mackenzie Provincial CWL council met with you, Minister Hoffman and your staff. We were pleased to see that you appointed Sheree Kwong See on July 14, 2016 to the position of Seniors Advocate for a term to end in 2019. We have had very positive feedback from some of our council members who have had the opportunity to meet Ms. See.

The purpose of our April 2016 meeting, was to encourage the government to consider amending the Health Act to make the Seniors' Advocate an Officer of the Legislature and therefore Independent for the following reasons:

- The need to have a permanent office that would not be dissolved through budget cuts or change of governments
- No formal complaint process for those seeking help.
- No authority through an Act that is afforded to the Mental Health Care Advocate and the Health Advocate
- Mental Health Act and Health Act provides an independent advocate; our seniors deserve no less.

We presented a binder with signatures on petitions from constituents across Alberta who supported our concern for the need to amend the Health Act in order to make the Seniors' Advocate an Officer of the Legislature and therefore Independent. We also discussed the possibility of a Seniors' Act.

None of these concerns have been addressed and we now have an added concern with the new website. The website itself does not outline the function of the office without hitting a link nor does it have a complaints link. Seniors are looking for help and information; the website is too difficult for them to navigate.

In our 2016 meeting, it was mentioned that your office would be looking to other jurisdictions for information re: senior advocates. Was a policy that would work or could be re-tooled for Alberta's seniors found? Would such a policy address our concerns? We would appreciate an update on that information.

By making the Seniors' Advocate an independent officer of the legislature it would guarantee that seniors rights and needs would continue to be met no matter who is the governing party. A Ministerial Order is at the will of the Minister and if budget cuts or elections eliminate that minister, the ministerial order is dissolved as well.

We are anxiously waiting for your reply as many of the constituents who signed our petitions are asking for a progress report.

For God and Canada,

Cathy Bouchard, President,
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cc: Dr. Sheree Kwong See
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