

November 2, 2023

President's Address

Doug Still

Welcome to the October-November issue of *Executive Notes* as posted to the STS website or passed along to you by your Chapter President. The information is a more in-depth review of business from Provincial Executive meetings held October 23-25. Chapter representatives and the Provincial Executive also met on October 26 as part of the Chapter Presidents' Meeting.

If you have questions or comments about *Executive Notes*, please touch base with your Executive Chapter liaison, me as Provincial President at socrates@sasktel.net, or the STS office by email at sts@sts.sk.ca or by phone at (306) 373-3879. Thank you to Chapter Presidents for your engagement in the process of passing along *Executive Notes* to your respective members.

The next edition of *Executive Notes* will appear in mid-January after the Provincial Executive meeting. While it seems a bit out of season, with Hallowe'en having just taken place, I wish each of you well as we soon begin to head into the pre-Christmas season with a number of Chapters holding festive-related events.

50th Anniversary Planning Committee Report

Jane Isinger

1. Update of 50th Anniversary Grants:

- 28 Chapters have requested grant support.
- At the Chapter Presidents' Meeting held on October 26, three chapters, Last Mountain, Melville and Saskatoon, were invited to speak about the 50th Anniversary events held in their communities. Special thanks to Beverly Magel, Yvette Beutel and Lyle Markowski for their interesting and informative presentations.
- If your Chapter has not taken advantage of the Anniversary Grant, I would encourage you to do so before December 31, 2023.
- The Historical Panels and the Power Point featuring Past-Presidents and Honorary Life Members are available to Chapters. Please contact the STS Office to make arrangements.

2. STS 50th Anniversary Booklet:

- The 50th Anniversary Booklet has been completed and copies were distributed at the Chapter Presidents' Meeting on October 26.
- Presidents have been asked to determine how many additional copies their Chapter would like. There will be a cost related to printing the booklets and we do not want to print more than is needed.

3. STS Permanent Recognition:

- A 50th Anniversary permanent recognition bench has been designed and installed on the sidewalk in front of the Arbos Centre for Learning at 2311 Arlington Avenue. Have a look at it if you are in Saskatoon sometime!



ACER-CART Report

Helen Sukovleff

Canada is the only country in the world that has a universal healthcare system that does not have universal coverage for prescription drugs outside of hospitals.

The Liberal-NDP Supply-and-Confidence Agreement, expiring in June 2025, commits both parties to passing a Canada Pharmacare Act by the end of 2023. This agreement all but guarantees federal legislation creating pharmacare.

“The agreement the Liberals and NDP, which has 25 MPs, entered into in March 2022 would see the opposition party support the minority government, and avoid triggering an election, until Parliament rises for the summer break in June 2025. In exchange, the Liberals have promised to take action on a list of shared priorities — including pharmacare.”— *Toronto Star/Canadian Press, October 15, 2023.*

“It is time to move past these hesitations, as the overall benefits of pharmacare on the well-being of all Canadians are clear, irrefutable, and increasingly urgent. The “unfinished business” of medicare is finally within reach for Canadians — let’s make it a reality.” — says Dr. Eric Hoskins, physician and former Ontario Health Minister, who wrote the 2019 federally-commissioned report on pharmacare, *Globe and Mail, October 16, 2023.*

I bring this to your attention because we are close to the deadline of the end of 2023 in the Supply-and-Confidence Agreement. I’ll be watching and I expect you will be also.

AGM Committee Report

Huguette Kitchen, Anna Wehrkamp

- The STS Annual General Meeting will be held in Saskatoon at the Travelodge from May 7-9, 2024. The Committee continues to plan the event based on feedback from evaluations completed at the 2023 AGM.
- The agenda will be determined in the coming months, but the core program will focus on meeting the legal and governance requirements of the organization.
- The focus of the October meeting was generating ideas for potential speakers, interest sessions and entertainment. In addition, the Committee identified key factors for the potential selection of a new venue for future AGMs and also reviewed some venue options. This review will continue at the January Committee meeting.
- When considering Delegates, Chapters are encouraged to invite a recently retired teacher.

Budget, Finance and Audit Committee Report

Sue Amundrud

- Our current membership (as of October 25) is 12,208.
- Shane Biehn of Connor, Clark and Lunn provided material and gave a presentation regarding the status of our investments for the first quarter. It was both timely and informative, and very well received.
- Our audited financial statements are now finalized and were distributed to Chapter Presidents during their meeting on October 26 and can be sent to members upon request.
- A revised plan for travel support for the AGM was reviewed. Further details will be provided to Chapter Presidents.

- First quarter revenues for the Operating Fund are \$296,328 with expenses of \$147,514. It is still early in the fiscal year and the usual annual expenses typically do not come in on a regular consistent basis. The Committee will continue to monitor.
- The second draft of a proposed budget for 2024-25 was reviewed, and suggestions for further revisions were made.
- The Committee finalized their goals for the 2023-24 year, as follows:
 - Create a 2024-25 budget that supports the aims of the organization.
 - Continue to monitor the current budget.
 - Improve members' financial knowledge base regarding the financial operations of the STS.
 - Encourage financial transparency and processes for avoiding fraud at both provincial and Chapter levels.
 - Monitor the investment portfolios.
 - Examine Fee and Budget resolutions coming to the AGM.

Communications Advisory Committee Report

Joyce Hoffman

At our October Committee Meeting, the Communications Advisory Committee determined to systematically review the purpose and function of the organizational communication that was set out in our goal for this year.

As a Committee, we began with website and Facebook to encourage the use of both areas. We spoke of accessibility, the use of each forum as it is now, as well as possible improvements that could be made to both areas to make them more user-friendly and improvements the Committee members felt could and should be explored.

In future meetings this year, we will explore the other areas of sending and receiving information that were stated in our goal for the Committee.

Governance and Handbook Review Committee Report

Terri Mitchell

The Committee met in-person on October 23, 2023, and reviewed the proposed "Expectations of Conduct for Executive Members". The document was updated to include a statement regarding indictable offenses and was approved by the Executive. The updated "Expectations of Conduct for Executive Members" will be added to the *Policy Handbook* as Guideline 1.

With reference to the updated Guideline 1, the Committee also discussed an addition to the Nomination Form declaring that the nominee has not been convicted of an indictable offense in Canada for which the nominee has not subsequently received a pardon. In addition to the declaration, a listing of indictable offenses will appear on the Nomination Form as well as a link to the government website: [Table 16. Classification of offences \(statcan.gc.ca\)](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/26-651-x/2016001/article/14861-eng.htm).

Our agenda also included discussions regarding Resolution A.11 from the 2023 AGM. Resolution A.11 reads **BE IT RESOLVED** that Bylaw 4.7.4 be amended to read as follows: "Any proposed expenditures from the STS Contingency Reserve Fund must be approved at an STS Annual General Meeting or at an STS Special Business Meeting." This Resolution was referred to the Executive and was subsequently referred to the GAHR Committee for review.

In addition, the Committee initiated discussions of Policy 3.4 and Guideline 1.10.6 and 1.10.7 and will continue to formulate recommendations to be presented at the January 2024 Executive Meeting.

In a brief update on the Chapter Presidents' Meeting, input from Chapter Presidents and members regarding the ongoing work of the GAHR Committee was noted. Member input continues to be much appreciated, and Chapter Presidents were further invited to submit feedback specifically on Bylaw 5.

The GAHR Committee will meet via Zoom on November 21 to continue the discussions as outlined above and to review Bylaw 5 (Meetings) and Bylaw 7 (Quorum).

Group Benefits Committee Report

Sunil Pandlla

As we approach the halfway mark this year, our membership in the STS Group Benefits Plan is 9,042. While it has only been five weeks since our last meeting, there have been no areas of concern as the Plan continues to generate small excess revenues. From August to September 2023 we realized a \$154,000 surplus. While not a huge amount, it is showing signs of levelling off from previous months. Our net gain to date is \$544,000. The Committee received the audit for the Extended Health Benefit (EHB) plan. Blue Cross and Elev8 representatives gave a written overview of the trends / issues and reviewed comparatives for our Extended Health Benefits (EHB) from previous years against the first three months of the final year of our current agreement. The Committee has met once to begin planning the process and content of negotiating for a new contract effective July 1, 2024. We also reviewed the results of the Health Spending Account (HSA) which concluded on June 30.

The HSA, with over a \$2.1M allocation, ended with the following highlights:

- A total of 28,565 claims for approximately \$1,187,000 leaving an unused allocation of approximately \$960,000. These funds are being held by the STS and will be used within the overall provision of Extended Health Benefits or as a part of a new agreement with Saskatchewan Blue Cross that will be effective July 1, 2024.
- Approximately \$600,000 was paid in year 1 and approximately \$587,000 was paid in year two.
- The first choice of members for the use of the HSA was payment of Health Premiums, followed by Vision, Paramedical Services, and Hearing claims.

We appreciate the feedback provided at our Chapter Presidents' Meeting on the Group Benefits Plan and the Committee will, of course, take this into consideration.

Once again, the Plan usage currently continues to generate excess revenues but we expect this to decline or end as the winter season approaches. Indicators are that we will experience greater usage as the year goes on and this will balance out excess revenues being experienced so far. We will continue to monitor the financial trends of our plan and keep the membership informed.

We are pleased with our consulting firm, Elev8 Financial, as they provide feedback and continue to closely watch the financials of our plan and provide valuable information in terms of plan trends and issues. You can be assured that the Committee receives extensive reporting and has built a good understanding of plan operations and expenses through both Blue Cross and Elev8.

If you have any questions regarding the Group Benefits Plan, it is important that you contact the Office and the staff will assist you with your concerns.

Honorary Life Membership Committee Report

Don Gabel

Honorary Life Member nominations deadline is March 1, 2024. If you feel you have a worthy recipient for the award fill out a nomination.

Please use the rubric as your template when making a nomination.

If you have any questions in regards to nominations you can contact Don Gabel at: 306-278-7918 or at gabeldon@hotmail.com

Office and Staffing Committee Report

Doug Still

With the retirement of our long-term Office Manager Colleen Bailey at the end of the year, we are wanting to indicate there will be some changes in the responsibilities of our current office staff, as well as the hiring of a new employee. As such we are pleased to announce the following:

- Heather Hase moves to the position of Group Benefits and Finance Coordinator (formerly known as Office Manager)
- MJ Krips moves to the position of Membership and Communications Coordinator (formerly known as Assistant Office Manager)
- Sheri Schmitz has been hired to the position of Member Service Representative (formerly known as Administrative Assistant)

We look forward to Sheri starting on December 4, 2023. We will miss Colleen and wish her all the best for a healthy and happy retirement!

Recreation Committee Report

Alan Laughlin, Don Gabel

Approval was given to the Mainline Chapter's request to host Stitch 'N' Quilt in 2024, pending the receipt of actual dates.

Final reports were received from Moose Jaw Chapter (Stitch 'N' Quilt 2023) and Wakaw Chapter (Kaiser 2023).

Resolutions Committee Report

Alan Laughlin, Don Gabel

Resolutions deadline is March 1st. In order to have resolutions approved in time for inclusion in the Resolutions booklet at AGM, this deadline must be observed.

Resolutions should address the Aims of the STS as found on page 1 of the *Policy Handbook*.

The format for writing resolutions is found in Guideline 3, on page 20 of the *Policy Handbook*.

Click here to view a digital version of the *Policy Handbook*: [STSPolicyHandbook2023](#)