

OUTREACH



To The Superannuated Teachers
of Saskatchewan

President's Report

Sunil Pandila

A year ago, our world and lives changed! After the first anniversary of the declaration of the pandemic, one cannot help but reflect on the events over the past year. It seems like all of our lives have been in a state of suspended animation. Our normal activities, routines throughout the year and plans for travel suddenly were on hold, and we settled into a lifestyle, that for most of us, would keep us more isolated yet, hopefully safe and healthy. As we head into spring 2021, I see optimism and less anxiety, as the vaccine safety net becomes a reality. Once in a while you have to hit the reset button on electronics to make them functional again. The past year was, to some degree, a reset button on human activity. It made us think about every aspect of our lives, the need to value what we have and the importance of social interaction. Reflection is an important and necessary activity from which to look forward to the future. As teachers, we know the value of reflection in the learning process. This is what we must now do at all levels (individual, community, local, global) to make our world a better place.

For our organization, and many others, adaptation was the key to carrying on our fundamental responsibilities. Our Provincial Executive had to make decisions

even though we had postponed our 2020 Annual General Meeting. As such, the individuals you elected at the 2019 AGM voluntarily stayed on for the past year and did what needed to be done and operated in essentially a totally digital format. I want to thank all the members of the Executive for their dedication and commitment to the process as we continue to work on behalf of all members.

Since the fall, a sub-committee of the Executive has worked diligently on the Executive Guidelines in the beginnings of a Governance and Policy Review. It was important that this review be done. I am pleased to say that the Committee has completed that work, and the draft was presented to the Executive at the online March meetings. These guidelines will be published in the revised *Policy Handbook* for next year. The work will continue into next year as we look to revise STS Policies. This will present challenges, as many of our Chapter activities have been on pause over the year and soliciting input from our members for revisions will be an important part of this process. So how do we accomplish this task when we are not meeting? I know we can find solutions and work on completing this goal.

The Executive also reviewed reports from the other Executive Committees and decisions were made based on their information and recommendations. The various Executive Committees have included their reports in this edition with more detailed information for you.

It is at this time of year that we begin to shift our energies to the organization of our AGM. The dates for our AGM are May 13-14, 2021. As we continue to operate under the provincial health guidelines, our AGM will be in a virtual format. We understand the virtual format poses challenges, but I encourage you to participate as Delegates for your Chapter. The format will be revised to reduce screen time and we will fulfill both the 2020 and 2021 Annual General Meetings. To support your Delegates, our service provider will be conducting a practice session so people can become familiar and more comfortable with the digital platform we will be using. I always look forward to our annual meeting, and this year is no different. We will carry on and complete the necessary legalities at our 2020 AGM for the Executive to carry out their duties for 2020-21. Presidents and Delegates will be receiving information packages so they will have paper copies of the materials in front of

them as opposed to doing a lot of reading on screen. I know this will make it easier for all participants.

I would like to congratulate the BC Retired Teachers' Association on the occasion of their 75th Anniversary. On behalf of STS, I sent them a video message on reaching this milestone. They will share the messages with their Delegates at their virtual AGM later this year.

I know we are constantly bombarded with all types of news through various media outlets. Sometimes it can become an overload with conflicting information. Together with SSM we have received and posted health updates to provide

an opportunity for everyone to get relevant information from the Saskatchewan Health Authority. Also we have been able to participate in the ongoing weekly Town Hall meetings with topics to include updates on the following:

- Epidemiological Trends and Projections
- Pandemic Response – Offensive and Defensive Strategies
- Vaccination Strategy
- Opportunity for Questions and Discussion

We are not sure what the immediate future holds, but the return of our regular STS activities, whether they

are recreation events or our Chapter gatherings, can only be done once it is safe to do so. Only time will tell when this will happen so as we proceed into 2021, I would like to wish each of our members “happy spring” and a time to get back outdoors and enjoy the gardening activities!

For more information about any of our programs, initiatives, or how we can support you in your Chapters, please do not hesitate to call the STS Office at 306-373-3879 or visit our website at www.sts.sk.ca. You can also contact me at sunil.pandila@sasktel.net or 306-692-2420.

ACER-CART

Marie LeBlanc-Warick

The following are highlights from the ACER-CART Executive.

The 2021 ACER-CART Annual General Meeting will be held virtually June 4, 2021. On June 3, 2021, ACER-CART will hold a Pre-AGM conference. It is scheduled for 11 a.m. Eastern time. The format and registration process is being developed. The conference will be available to all 170,000 ACER-CART members. There are two confirmed speakers who will address seniors' issues: Dr. Samir K. Sinha will address “Aging at Home” and Dr. Steve Morgan will speak to “A National Pharmare Plan”.

The ACER-CART Legislation Committee, chaired by President Gerry Tiede, has as a goal for 2020-2021, reviewing how Policies are produced and the review and reorganization of ACER-CART's

Policies. This work continues.

The Communications Committee, chaired by Marilyn Bossert, wish to thank the STS for including ACER-CART reports in its publications and adding a link to ACER-CART on the STS website.

The Health Services Committee, chaired by Margaret Urquhart, created a survey and sent it to Member Associations asking for information regarding the availability and the coverage, in each jurisdiction, for vaccines, including high dose flu vaccine and shingles vaccine. The committee is also collecting information regarding pharmaceutical company kickbacks and violations of the Canada Health Act.

The Pension and Retirement Income Committee, chaired by

Martin Higgs, is also collecting information regarding current COLA arrangements, any concerns about pension security, and a request for notification to ACER-CART if any changes to pensions are about to occur.

The Political Advocacy Committee, chaired by Martha Foster, is preparing issue sheets that focus on a National Seniors Strategy. These may be used in a federal election information brochure. The committee is also investigating providing a letter that members can access, on the ACER-CART website, which will easily be transmitted to federal and provincial government members supporting ACER-CART Priorities.

Annual General Meeting

Jane Isinger and Doug Still

There's an old adage that says the third time is a charm. We are certainly hopeful that this is the case with our upcoming AGM, May 13 and 14. No one knows for sure what the origin of this saying is, but it might have its roots in English law referring to setting a convicted person free if they escaped the gallows a third time!

It was a year ago in the March-April 2020 edition of *Outreach* that the postponement of the May 2020 AGM was announced due to the ban on large gatherings during a time of pandemic. The Provincial Executive subsequently rescheduled the replacement event for early November 2020, but it was again postponed, due to the continuing presence of COVID-19.

It has been an interesting time planning the 2020 AGM for the third time. With the passage of a full year, we face a new reality for the first time; holding two AGMs together amid continued social distancing. For the first time in the history of the STS, we will hold these two AGMs in a virtual format.

A lot of additional research went into the planning for May 2021. Our Executive Secretary, Murray Wall, dialogued with our sister organizations in Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia on how they carried out their annual meetings. Because our bylaws do not address a situation where an AGM cannot be held, legal advice was obtained about how best to proceed in order to meet basic legal requirements for the organization. Based on the advice and information we were provided, the final format for May 13 and 14 was approved by the Provincial Executive at our March 11, 2021, meeting.

The 2020 AGM will be held the morning of May 13 from 9:00 a.m. until approximately 10:30 a.m. This 'stub' AGM as it is being referred to, will cover what legal counsel advises

are the basic legal and constitutional requirements of the organization.

Last year's AGM will then transition mid-morning to the 2021 AGM which will look more familiar to those who have attended such events in the past, with the exception of all in-person activities. Thursday's agenda will proceed until approximately the noon hour. The following day, the 2021 AGM will continue with the bulk of the resolutions, budgetary approvals, and the election of the Provincial Executive. As with the day prior, the plan is to conduct our business in approximately three hours.

We will be using two virtual platforms: Zoom and DOTS. A growing number of our members have gained familiarity with Zoom in the past year. Data on the Spot (DOTS) is a platform that allows Delegates to participate in voting for resolutions and the Executive. DOTS is a Canadian company that has worked with hundreds of organizations in our country and the USA. The STF has been using DOTS, and the platform has proven to be efficient.

During the week prior to the AGM, DOTS will do a test vote/link with Delegates, tracking those who have access and following up with them if there are issues. Chapter Presidents are reminded to submit names, email addresses and phone contacts of Delegates to assist in the training process. Delegate participation is not limited to a computer, as other electronic devices like smart phones and tablets will also be effective.

We look forward to the two AGMs, and with good planning and support, we will have a successful provincial gathering. Even more exciting, is the growing expectation that the STS may see a traditional 2022 AGM, the first in person event of a provincial nature in three years. The third time will indeed be a charm.

Congratulations!

The following members were selected for Honorary Life Membership 2021:

Clarence Becker
Okanagan Valley Chapter

Irene Norton
Moosomin Chapter

Peter Stroh
Saskatoon Chapter

Nominations

Maxine Stinka

President/Councillor:

Don Gabel
Sunil Pandila

Vice-President/Councillor:

Sue Amundrud
Joyce Hoffman

ACER-CART:

Helen Sukovieff

Councillors:

Jane Isinger
Alan Laughlin
Terri Mitchell
Doug Still

Members-at-Large:

Gary Boechler
Diane Marchand
Devona Putland
Diane Selby
Anna Wehrkamp
Adeline Wuschenny

STS Office Reminders

- STS Group Benefit Planholders who are eligible for the Saskatchewan Seniors' Drug Plan may be eligible for a reduced premium by providing the STS Office with a copy of the Seniors' Drug Plan confirmation letter.

For information on the Saskatchewan Seniors' Drug Plan, please speak with your pharmacist or contact the Seniors' Drug Plan office at 1-800-667-7581. If you live in Regina please call 306-787-3317.

- For any changes to your address and/or Group Benefits coverage, please contact the STS Office directly at 306-373-3879 or sts@sts.sk.ca.
- If you are on a temporary contract and wish to suspend your STS Group Benefits, please contact the STS Office via email prior to the 15th of the month to be effective the 1st of the following month.
- Please make sure that you are using the correct email address for the STS: sts@sts.sk.ca.

Budget, Finance and Audit

Don Gabel

The Budget, Finance and Audit Committee provides an oversight role for the financial operations of the STS. The Committee met on March 10, 2021, and reviewed the current financial position of the STS Operating and the STS Extended Health Funds. The financial statements as of January 31, 2021, show our organization to be in a strong financial position. The Committee review of the Statement of Operations shows that as of January 31, 2021, current year to date revenues in excess of expenses are \$239,754.82. This is compared to January 31, 2020 where revenue in excess of expenses was \$203,001.51. The reduced expenses are largely COVID-19 related with cancellation, postponement or shifting of events and meetings to online formats along with reduced travel costs. Income has increased as membership numbers have increased. All budget lines are operating within projections.

As of March 10, 2021, membership in the STS was 11,853 which is an increase of 12 from January 11, 2021.

The Committee recommended the following items to the Executive for consideration and approval:

1. That the proposed budget for 2021-22 fiscal year be brought to the Annual General Meeting.
2. That the Auditor for the upcoming year be Deloitte.
3. That a transfer of funds to the Contingency Fund from the Operations Reserve Fund be delayed until the review by the Governance and Handbook Review Committee is complete.
4. That the membership fee for 2021-22 be \$30.00.
5. That the rebate to Chapters be increased to \$1000.00 plus \$8.00 per member for 2021-22.

Governance and Handbook Review

Terri Mitchell

The Governance and Handbook Review Committee has met a number of times in the last months and has recognized that a policy review is a major undertaking. The desire of the Committee is that it should be done thoroughly, with ample opportunity for discussion and input on multiple levels and should not be subject to strict time constraints.

The Committee has currently focused on reviewing the Guidelines in the *Policy Handbook* and also updating the *STS Executive Handbook*, September 2019.

Approval of these documents occurred at the March 11, 2021, Executive meeting which will allow the *STS Executive Handbook* to be available to the newly elected Executive members after the AGM in May. The updated Guidelines will be printed in the *STS Policy Handbook* July 1, 2021, and ultimately available on the STS website.

Sincere thanks to the Committee for many hours of rich discussion, and to the Office Staff for all of their contributions in facilitating this review process.

Proposed 2021-22 Budget

July 1, 2021- June 30, 2022

	2018-19	2018-19	2019-20	2019-20	2020-21	2020-21	2021-22
INCOME	BUDGET	ACTUAL	BUDGET	ACTUAL	PROPOSED	7 MONTH	PROPOSED
Membership Fees	345,000.00	344,998.00	350,000.00	349,891.00	350,000.00	207,331.00	354,000.00
Admin Commission (Benefits Plan)	460,000.00	593,387.00	600,000.00	665,322.00	600,000.00	399,902.54	665,000.00
Interest Income	2,500.00	3,967.00	2,000.00	5,590.00	2,000.00	4,177.25	2,500.00
Grant Revenue	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	-	1,500.00
Sundry	-	172.00	500.00	39.00	500.00	249.00	500.00
TOTAL INCOME	809,000.00	944,024.00	954,000.00	1,022,342.00	954,000.00	611,659.79	1,023,500.00
EXPENSES							
Annual General Meeting	100,000.00	91,060.00	100,000.00	211.00	100,000.00	600.83	110,000.00
Amortization	15,000.00	6,775.00	15,000.00	6,340.00	15,000.00	4,664.95	15,000.00
Bank Service Charge	1,000.00	864.00	1,000.00	1,104.00	1,000.00	504.00	1,000.00
Chapter Presidents' Meeting	20,000.00	16,564.00	20,000.00	13,487.00	20,000.00	-	25,000.00
Chapter Rebates	100,000.00	97,296.00	100,000.00	98,248.00	100,000.00	99,008.00	145,000.00
Communications, Publications, PR	60,000.00	51,899.00	60,000.00	36,649.00	60,000.00	24,551.88	100,000.00
Computer and Programming	30,000.00	38,166.00	40,000.00	10,820.00	40,000.00	8,169.32	50,000.00
Executive and Committee Meetings	45,000.00	29,038.00	45,000.00	32,549.00	45,000.00	4,708.71	50,000.00
Executive Chapter Travel	13,000.00	11,546.00	14,000.00	6,067.00	14,000.00	781.14	16,000.00
Gain/Loss on Disp of Assets	-	-	-	2,278.00	-	-	-
Management Fees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
McDowell Foundation	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	10,000.00
Office Operation	125,000.00	110,431.00	160,000.00	119,174.00	160,000.00	79,052.57	165,000.00
Office Staff	260,000.00	233,398.00	320,000.00	268,413.00	320,000.00	140,693.97	270,000.00
Recreation	6,000.00	8,104.00	8,000.00	4,788.00	8,000.00	-	10,000.00
Retirement Lifestyles	10,000.00	2,786.00	10,000.00	1,494.00	10,000.00	-	10,000.00
Scholarships	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00
STS Affiliations	12,000.00	9,133.00	12,000.00	5,583.00	12,000.00	4,169.60	12,000.00
Management Fees				4,549.00			
TOTAL EXPENSES	802,000.00	712,060.00	910,000.00	612,205.00	910,000.00	371,904.97	992,000.00
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	7,000.00	231,964.00	44,000.00	410,137.00	44,000.00		31,500.00

NOTES:

Note 1: The proposed budget for 2021-22 is based on an annual fee of \$30.00.

Note 2: A financial statement for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021 will be prepared as soon as possible after year-end, audited, and made available to all STS Chapters. Copies of the audited financial statement for 2020-21 will also be made available to all AGM delegates at the 2022 AGM.

Note 3: The Operations Reserve Fund had a balance of \$ 632,376 as at June 30, 2020. Should a deficit be incurred for the 2021-22 fiscal year, it would be covered by monies from the Operations Reserve Fund.

ASSUMPTIONS:

1. 11,800 Members
2. Rebate to Chapters as follows: \$1000.00 plus \$8.00 per member.

Group Benefits

Maxine Stinka

The Committee reviewed the Health and Dental Experience Report and the Integrated Health Management Analysis Report for the year February 2020 to January 2021. The first seven months of the third year of the STS contract with Saskatchewan Blue Cross (July 1, 2020 – January 31, 2021) show the total health revenue was approximately \$6.2M and claims and expenses approximately \$5.25M. Revenue for the Dental Plan was approximately \$3.7M and claims and expenses approximately \$3.5M for a total Plan surplus for the seven months of approximately \$1.2M. Claims are rising due to increasing utilization as well as increased drug costs and inflation. Some claim costs have risen in dollar amounts as service providers pass on their additional expenses incurred as a result of COVID-19

precautions. The Committee and Executive continue to study possible improvements to the Plan as the Unappropriated Reserve Fund continues to increase. Given that the Plan contract was extended to four years without a premium increase, along with some benefit enhancements, it is anticipated that a deficit will likely result in the fourth year. If that occurs, the deficit is covered by the Unappropriated Reserve Fund.

The Committee will continue to monitor the Benefits Plan to ensure it is sustainable, affordable, and provides a safety net for our members.

Total membership in one or both of the Health and Dental Plans as of March 2021 is 8,331, an increase of 12 over January 2021 and an increase of 188 since March 2020.

Members who are currently on the Group Benefits Plan can request a *Schedule of Benefits* booklet which details specifics of the provisions of the STS Plan. All of these documents are available on the STS website (sts.sk.ca) as well. If you have questions about your personal situation, the STS office staff is available 8:30 a.m. to noon and is always willing to assist you (306) 373-3879.

Teachers who are considering retirement will receive a copy of the new *STS Information Booklet* in their retirement package. It is also available upon request from the STS Office. This booklet includes a summary of the STS Group Benefits Plan as well as application forms.

Recreation

Don Gabel,
Alan Laughlin



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no provincial recreation events have been held or were approved at the last Executive meeting. Recreation events will resume when it is safe to have people gathering for such purposes. One of those indicators of safety will be when the majority of the population have received their vaccinations. As had been previously indicated, those Chapters who had been approved to host recreation events will be given first opportunity to host when events resume, should they wish to do so.

Resolutions

Alan Laughlin

The deadline for receiving resolutions for the 2021 AGM to be included in this edition of *Outreach* was March 1, 2021. Resolutions previously submitted for the postponed 2020 AGM were automatically carried forward to the 2021 AGM. At this time 38 resolutions have been approved to proceed to the May 13-14, 2021, Annual General Meetings. Resolutions may still be received up to the commencement of the AGM but those approved will not be published prior to the meeting.

Disposition of resolutions carried at the 2019 AGM are contained in the Disposition of Resolutions to be published prior to the AGM and available on the STS website (www.sts.sk.ca).

Resolutions to AGM

2020 Resolutions

Resolutions that were received before March 1, 2020, and were accepted by the Resolutions Committee based on Guideline 3 – Criteria for Format of Resolutions in the *STS Policy Handbook*, are being brought forward in the 2021 AGM portion of this meeting. The following resolutions are being considered in the 2020 portion of the meeting in order to fulfill legal and governance requirements. Legal counsel was consulted in all aspects of this process and decision making.

There is one Bylaw Resolution A.1 that has been submitted. This is being emailed to Chapter Presidents.

Resolutions Directed to STS (A) (Non Bylaws)

A.2 BE IT RESOLVED that elections for the 2020 Annual General Meeting be deferred to the 2021 Annual General Meeting and that current Provincial Executive members have their terms extended until June 30, 2021. **STS Executive**

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

This resolution defers elections to the 2021 AGM, which is occurring immediately after the close of the 2020 AGM. Legal counsel was consulted and agrees that this is a reasonable approach given the uniqueness of the situation.

A.3 BE IT RESOLVED that nominations received for the 2020 elections be considered for elections held at the 2021 Annual General Meeting. **STS Executive**

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

This resolution ensures nominations submitted for the 2020 elections are honored at the 2021 election.

A.4 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS annual fee for 2020-2021 be confirmed as being \$30.00 per person. **STS Executive**

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

This resolution is framed as “confirming” as it is currently occurring due to the necessary postponement of the 2020 AGM.

A.5 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS annual rebate to each Chapter for 2020-2021 be confirmed as being \$400.00 plus \$8.00 per member. **STS Executive**

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

This resolution is framed as “confirming” as it is currently occurring due to the necessary postponement of the 2020 AGM.

A.6 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS budget for July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021 be confirmed as having no changes from the approved July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020 budget. **STS Executive**

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

This resolution is framed as “confirming” as it is currently occurring due to the necessary postponement of the 2020 AGM.

A.7 BE IT RESOLVED that Deloitte be confirmed as the STS Auditor for 2020-2021. **STS Executive**

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

This resolution is framed as “confirming” as it is currently occurring due to the necessary postponement of the 2020 AGM.

2021 Resolutions

The following resolutions include resolutions submitted for the 2020 AGM as well as those received before March 1, 2021, and were accepted by the Resolutions Committee based on Guideline 3 – Criteria for Format of Resolutions. Background submitted by the movers of the resolution is included if the background met the criteria set out Guideline 3. In some cases, the background submitted was edited so as to meet the criteria of Guideline 3 or re-organized for consistency of format. For some resolutions, the STS office staff has provided additional background information for Delegates’ consideration.

There are two Bylaw Resolutions A.1 and A.2 that have been submitted. These are being emailed to Chapter Presidents.

Resolutions Directed to STS (A) (Non Bylaws)

A.3 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS implement a public information and awareness program of issues affecting the STS and seniors for political parties and candidates before the provincial election using money from the Contingency Fund. **Peter Stroh**

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

The March 31, 2019, audited statement showed a balance of \$1,205,991.41 in the Contingency Fund. Bylaw 4.6.3 states in part that the fund shall be used, “to provide financial means for a public information program in support of the goals of the STS”.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Bylaw 4.6.3 states in full, “The Contingency Fund shall be used to provide legal support for the organization, to provide financial means for a

public information program in support of the goals of the STS or to provide financial support to deal with emergent circumstances”.

The STS Advocacy Committee developed and distributed an election pamphlet for the provincial election in October 2020.

A.4 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS implement a provincial public information and awareness program using money from the Contingency Fund, on issues arising from the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affecting seniors, (including STS members). **Peter Stroh**

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

The March 31, 2019 audited statement showed a balance of \$1,205,991.41 in the Contingency Fund. Bylaw 4.6.3 states in part that the fund shall be used, “to provide financial means for a public information program in support of the goals of the STS”.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Bylaw 4.6.3 states in full, “The Contingency Fund shall be used to provide legal support for the organization, to provide financial means for a public information program in support of the goals of the STS or to provide financial support to deal with emergent circumstances”.

A.5 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS encourage its Chapters and individual members to actively support the STF campaign regarding class size and composition by registering for the STF online platform, Tell Them Tuesday. **STS Regina Chapter**

A.6 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS provide access on the STS Website to information and ideas for messages that enable members to request support for teachers during this pandemic from people in positions of authority such as school boards and the Minister of Education. **STS Regina Executive**

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

There are a variety of guidelines pertaining to the physical environment, personal safety, testing, tracing and vaccinating that teachers are working hard to try and implement. At the same time teachers and students have been dealing with extremely stressful situations adapting to digital learning and dealing with a variety of home stressors. Teachers have been expressing concern about students that have not been attending school and the continuing issues regarding class size and composition, complexity and access to resources and professionals. Superannuated teachers can serve a role in supporting teachers as well as advocating for support for teachers.

A.7 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS encourage its Chapters and individual members to communicate their concerns for teachers during this pandemic, to the Minister of Education and relevant local education authorities, with a copy to the STS and STF. **STS Regina Executive**

A.8 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS adopt a position opposed to “Ageism” in all its forms including medical treatment by triage based on birthdates, and inadequate care for residents in long-term care facilities. **Peter Stroh**

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

Many senior residents in long-term care facilities have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some health authorities have discussed allocating scarce medical services based on age.

A.9 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS develop a policy to counter “ageism”. **Peter Stroh**

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

Many senior residents in long-term care facilities have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some health authorities have discussed allocating scarce medical services based on age.

A.10 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS undertake an extensive survey of members to determine the needs, goals and wishes of members to guide the STS in adapting and emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. **Peter Stroh**

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

Organizations at all levels have adapted management procedures, communication and meeting systems during the pandemic. Many organizations are also re-culturing goals, activities and member services in major ways beyond simply using technology for meetings.

As reported in *Outreach*, the STS “continues to be in a strong financial position”, but has been silent on any goals and needs for the surplus.

A.11 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS investigate extending travel coverage from 65 days per trip to 75 days per trip in the STS Group Benefits Plan. **Potashville Esterhazy Chapter**

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

Travel coverage of 65 days is frequently too short for many members who have to come back to their home province in order to extend coverage. The more often you have to come back to one’s home province, the more often it affects the environment

in a time where we are supposed to be combating climate change.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Saskatchewan Blue Cross, as well as other insurance carriers, offer optional "Top Up" travel insurance for individuals who wish to purchase coverage beyond the number of days covered by the STS Group Benefits Plan.

A.12 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS investigate extending travel coverage from 65 days per trip to 93 days per trip in the STS Group Benefits Plan.

Peter Stroh

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

Sixty-five days is frequently too short resulting in increased costs and travel risks to members who must return in order to restart the coverage period. Alberta and Ontario plans have 92 and 93 day terms respectively.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Saskatchewan Blue Cross, as well as other insurance carriers, offer optional "Top Up" travel insurance for individuals who wish to purchase coverage beyond the number of days covered by the STS Group Benefits Plan.

A.13 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS investigate decreasing the Travel Exclusions Limitations in the Group Benefits Plan from three months to one month.

Peter Stroh

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

The current exclusion states: Travel Benefits will not be payable for charges in connection with the following: A pre-existing condition, illness or injury for which symptoms occurred and/or required medical investigation, diagnosis, treatment or hospitalization within three months immediately preceding departure date. Routine check-ups with no change in medication or treatment are not considered medical investigation, diagnosis or treatment.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

A statement of exclusions is provided by insurance carriers for the purpose of building clarity regarding what benefits will, and will not, be covered. In the case of the STS Health and Dental Benefits Plan, the Schedule of Benefits states:

"Pre-existing conditions are covered provided the covered person's condition is stable and/or has been controlled by consistent treatment with prescribed medication for the three months immediately preceding the day of departure, and medical attention is not reasonably anticipated during the travel period. To be considered stable a condition

must not have required medical investigation, diagnosis, treatment or hospitalization in the three months immediately preceding the departure date. Routine checkups with no change in medication or treatment are not considered medical investigation, diagnosis or treatment, so they will not affect your coverage".

A.14 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS refund individual members of the Superannuated Teachers Extended Health Plan any rebate from Saskatchewan Blue Cross, beyond the negotiated 3.5% administrative commission, arising from the reduced claim experience as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Peter Stroh

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

Most medical health insurers experienced lower claims in the last year and have rebated insured individuals directly or by subsequent reduced premiums.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The structure of Extended Health Plan contract with Saskatchewan Blue Cross is such that there is no provision for "rebates" in the event of lower usage. In its place, an annual reconciliation is made regarding premiums and claims paid. If premiums exceed claims paid, the excess is returned to STS and becomes part of the Unappropriated Reserve Fund (Guideline 9.3). If claims exceed premiums, a payment is made to Saskatchewan Blue Cross from the Unappropriated Reserve Fund. In this way, the movement of money into and out of the Unappropriated Reserve Fund allows for stability of the premium levels, financial stability of the Plan overall or for benefit improvements (Guideline 9.3).

A.15 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS conduct a review of the appropriate uses and levels in the Superannuated Teachers Extended Health Plan Unappropriated Reserve Fund.

Peter Stroh

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

This resolution is intended to address the relative balance between accrued surpluses benefiting current members versus open ended accumulations for future generations.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In fall 2020 the Provincial Executive created a Governance and Handbook Review Committee of the Executive to begin the process of reviewing the current *STS Policy Handbook*. Part of this review has been the examination of Bylaw 4 – Financial Affairs as well as Guideline 9 – Financial Affairs, both of which include guidance related to the Unappropriated Reserve Fund.

- A.16 BE IT RESOLVED** that the STS Executive conduct a study of the representation of out-of-Province STS members on the STS Executive.

Okanagan Valley Chapter

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

There are a significant number of STS members that live out of province. Each Province operates its own Medical Services Plan, Drug Plan and Seniors' Services, all of which may vary significantly from that found in the Province of Saskatchewan. There may be strategies that could be put in place to ensure effective two-way communication with non-resident STS members or mechanisms for soliciting and incorporating the views of non-resident STS members where relevant decisions are being taken.

- A.17 BE IT RESOLVED** that the STS Executive review all aspects of the Contingency Fund including the amount of money set aside and uses for the money in the fund and make recommendations to the 2022 AGM.

STS Executive

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

STS Bylaw 4.6 and Guideline 9.2 currently provide guidance regarding the Contingency Fund. Questions have arisen regarding whether the target amounts and potential uses are meeting STS needs.

- A.18 BE IT RESOLVED** that STS work together with the host hotel for STS events to accommodate the needs of disabled and handicapped individuals.

Dwain Drew

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

Current hotel supports and accessibility structures are inadequate for some disabled and handicapped individuals. Further steps could be taken by the hotel and / or the STS to address these needs.

- A.19 BE IT RESOLVED** that the STS spend the equivalent of the unused portion of the budgeted amount for Recreation from the Budget Years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 in three equal portions on the STS charitable donations to the University of Regina, the University of Saskatchewan and the McDowell Foundation.

Peter Stroh

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

Most STS supported recreation activities have been cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and therefore most of the budget was not used. The recreation budget is currently \$8000.00 and the current STS budget for various donations is: University of Regina Education Scholarship \$1500.00, University of Saskatchewan Education Scholarship \$1500.00, McDowell Foundation \$2000.00.

Most charitable donation supported activities have experienced a recent decline in donations. This resolution is specific to two years unspent budget for recreation. The resolution does not address any other COVID-19 impacted budget line expenditures, surpluses, overall reserves, nor future donations.

Resolutions Directed to STF (B)

No resolutions have been directed to the STF.

Resolutions Directed to ACER-CART (C)

- C.1 BE IT RESOLVED** that ACER CART investigate protocols with Health Canada, making organ and tissue donation feasible from rural and remote locations.

The Battlefords and District Chapter

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Saskatchewan Health Authority was contacted for additional information and responded by saying, "The most important thing to do, is speak with your loved ones regarding your wishes to donate. They will ultimately likely be the ones giving consent, upon a person's demise. We are currently working on a Registry in Saskatchewan, but it is not complete as of yet. The other thing we can do is apply the little organ donor sticker on your health card."

Resolutions Directed to the Government (D)

- D.1 BE IT RESOLVED** that the STS, subject to STF Bylaw 4.5.1 and STS Bylaw 6.2.7.5, lobby the provincial government that the Minister for Seniors has sufficient staff and funding to support the needs of seniors in Saskatchewan.

Carrot River Valley (Melfort & District) Chapter

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

SSM's report "Strategizing for Positive Aging in Saskatchewan" (released November 2019) identified six themes covering the concerns and vision for the future raised by older Saskatchewan adults through forums and focus groups. These were: transportation, housing, available and affordable services, healthcare, finances and community involvement.

The report identifies the need for a government structure to address seniors' issues at a provincial level and to support strategies for positive aging.

The preference may be for an independent Seniors Advocate, but we recognize the appointment of a Minister for Seniors as a step forward. However, the current situation of a single staff person with no assigned budget limits the effectiveness of the position.

D.2 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS, subject to STF Bylaw 4.5.1 and STS Bylaw 6.2.7.5, urge the Government of Saskatchewan to commit financial support to Saskatchewan communities and SSM to support the Age-Friendly Communities initiative.

STS Regina Chapter

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

The World Health Organization initiated, promotes and supports Age-Friendly Communities around the globe. Unlike other jurisdictions in Canada, the Government of Saskatchewan does not provide financial support for the development and maintenance of Age-Friendly Communities.

D.3 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS, subject to STF Bylaw 4.5.1 and STS Bylaw 6.2.7.5, communicate concerns for teachers during this pandemic to the Minister of Education with a copy to the STF.

STS Regina Executive

D.4 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS, subject to STF Bylaw 4.5.1 and STS Bylaw 6.2.7.5, call upon the Government of Saskatchewan to provide high speed internet access to low income urban neighborhoods at no charge.

STS Regina Executive

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

Students require access to internet for educational purposes. Internet is an equalizer whether in a pandemic or not. All children should have access to information and support for learning.

D.5 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS, subject to STF Bylaw 4.5.1 and STS Bylaw 6.2.7.5, call upon the Government of Saskatchewan to expand internet service in rural and remote areas of Saskatchewan.

STS Regina Executive

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

Students require access to internet for educational purposes. Internet is an equalizer whether in a pandemic or not. All children should have access to information and support for learning.

D.6 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS together with SSM, ACER-CART and CARP lobby the federal government to develop and enforce national standards for long-term care residences.

Peter Stroh

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

The STS has frequently identified needs for senior living accommodations, care and health. Currently national standards do not exist. Currently long-term care residences are provincial responsibilities.

D.7 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS, subject to STF Bylaw 4.5.1 and STS Bylaw 6.2.7.5, lobby the provincial government to develop and enforce provincial standards for long-term care residences.

Peter Stroh

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

Residents in long-term care facilities, including seniors, have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

D.8 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS together with SSM, ACER-CART and CARP lobby the federal government to extend the temporary withdrawal reduction amounts for RRIFs.

Peter Stroh

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

Beginning at age 71 individuals must withdraw 5.28% of the value of their RRIF, although the amount was temporarily reduced for 2020 by 25% to 3.96% of the value of the RRIF. Real returns on investments are down at a time when life expectancy is generally up.

D.9 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS Executive advocate for the inclusion of medicinal cannabis in the Saskatchewan Drug Formulary.

Wakaw Chapter

D.10 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS, subject to STF Bylaw 4.5.1 and STS Bylaw 6.2.7.5, lobby the Minister for Seniors and the provincial government to add the shingles vaccine, Shingrix, to the Saskatchewan Drug Plan Formulary.

Saskatoon Chapter

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

Shingrix is a series of two doses of vaccine given two to six months apart with an effectiveness of 80 to 90%. The current cost of the vaccine is in excess of \$300.00.

D.11 BE IT RESOLVED that the STS, subject to STF Bylaw 4.5.1 and STS Bylaw 6.2.7.5, lobby the provincial government to increase funding for Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation (TAVI).

Saskatoon Chapter

BACKGROUND FROM MOVER:

Aortic stenosis is a congenital degenerative condition which disproportionately affects seniors. Current funding is limited to a certain number of procedures independent of the medical need.

From The Editor's Desk

Joyce Hoffman

As we watch the snow and ice melting, spring is on its way. We are also fortunate that COVID-19 vaccinations are beginning for certain age groups. We have lots to look forward to as spring progresses.

Preparations are currently underway for the upcoming 2020 and 2021 virtual AGM. I want to draw your attention to both the resolutions and the proposed budget found in this issue. Both will be considered for the upcoming AGM.

I would like to thank those individuals that have requested the digital copy of *Outreach*. Now is the time for others to consider making this switch as well, by completing the "tear out" portion and returning it to the STS Office.

Have a wonderful spring! Enjoy the upcoming AGM.

Did you know

The STS spends nearly \$50,000 per year on printing and mailing costs for the *Outreach!* You can help us reduce this cost by requesting the *Outreach* in an electronic format. You would receive an email when a new issue is being posted on the STS website and you can then access it at your leisure. This is a great way to help us save money, reduce paper usage and be more environmentally friendly. Please clip and send this back to us by email to sts@sts.sk.ca (you can just take a photo and email) or send by regular post.

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