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705.942.1928

## Celebrate 100!

~ Cathy McCullough



Rita Baum Hammond celebrates her 100th Birthday in March 2024

Family, friends and former students gathered recently to commemorate the remarkable milestone of one hundred years in the life of **Rita Hammond**. She was lauded as her family's matriarch, as an educator, and as a woman of strong faith and love for others.

Having graduated from Sault Collegiate in 1942 and from North Bay Teacher's College in 1943, Rita started her teaching career in a one-room schoolhouse at Kirby's Corners, serving eight grades and twenty students, before joining the Huron Superior Catholic School Board.

There she worked at St. John's where she taught grades 2, 3, and 4, managing a class of 50 students during the "baby boomer" era, a notably busy time. Her teaching tenure also included stints at St. Stanilaus, St. Mary's, Holy Angels, Sacred Heart and St. Mark.

Rita took a 12-year hiatus while she raised her children. During this time, she pursued further education, obtaining a Specialist Certificate in Resource Teaching and earning a degree at Laurentian University. Upon returning to work after raising her family, Rita served as a Resource Teacher until her retirement at the age of 63.

When asked about her teaching philosophy, Rita emphasized three points:

- ◆ Fostering a love for learning among her students
- ◆ Ensuring their success and confidence in learning
- ◆ Recognizing the importance of reading in expanding knowledge.

Congratulations and best wishes to Rita Hammond. What an honour it is to celebrate a century of living!



### RTOERO PROVINCIAL OFFICE:

Address: 18 Spadina Road, Toronto, ON M5R 2S7  
Telephone: 1.800.361.9888  
Fax: 1.416.962.1061  
Web Site: www.rtoero.ca



## UPCOMING DISTRICT 3 GENERAL MEETINGS

Location: Grand Gardens North

Time: Doors Open: 10:30 AM // Meeting Time: 11:00 AM

1. **Tuesday, March 19, 2024: Presentation: Mamma Mia singers from Korah C&VS**  
*Directed by Denine Williams*
  2. **Tuesday, May 28, 2024: Annual General Meeting (AGM)**  
*Speaker: Martha Foster, Chair, RTOERO*  
*Silent Auction: Fundraising for District 3 Scholarships*
- ~ PLUS ~
3. **Wednesday, May 8, 2024: Super Seniors' Luncheon**  
(Doors open at 11:00 AM. Start time at 11:30 AM.)

## New Members in RTOERO

We are pleased to welcome the following new members to District 3 since our last newsletter:

Mary Anne Amadio	Peter Mead
Nora Costello	Allen Prodan
Laird Cowell	Michael Sampson
Janet Dool	Sandra Trudel
Bonny McLean	

Greetings to all members!

We are off to the spring season and hope to meet our new members at the coming meetings at the Grand Gardens: Tuesday, March 19 and/or the Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, May 28.

We encourage you to become *involved* members, as you meet old friends and welcome new ones.

Check out our website at [district3.rtoero.ca](http://district3.rtoero.ca) for all the latest news and events.

Keep your personal profile up-to-date by calling our provincial office at 1.800.361.9888.

We're here for you.  
**Building a Future Together.**

Moyra O'Pallie, Membership/Recruitment

## AGM + Silent Auction

Our annual **Silent Auction** to raise funds for our scholarships for Algoma University and Sault College will be up and running at our **Annual General Meeting**, thanks to **Jean Campbell**.

**Volunteers are needed for the Silent Auction at the District 3 AGM on May 28:**

- ⇒ **Contributors to Auction items:** Items that are edible, consumable and/or useful. These items may be picked up prior to the meeting and will be on display at the event.
- ⇒ **Contact Jean Campbell** at 705.248.1612 OR at [fletcherlake@hotmail.com](mailto:fletcherlake@hotmail.com) for pickup of items.
- ⇒ **Bidding on the items at the AGM:** Good luck!
- ⇒ **Make a donation.**

**Thank you for making this a successful event!**

Kathy Greening, Silent Auction Convenor

## From The President Of District 3 Algoma

Chris Rous



Dear Members,

As the vibrant colors of spring begin to emerge, I am delighted to extend warm greetings to all members of RTOERO. It is with great pleasure that I bring to you our spring newsletter, packed with updates, insights, and exciting news from our community

First and foremost, I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to each and every one of you for your commitment and dedication to our organization. Your continued support and active participation are the driving forces behind our success, and for that, I am truly grateful.

As we embark on this new season, I am thrilled to share some highlights and initiatives that are shaping the trajectory of RTOERO:

**Advocacy Efforts:** Our advocacy efforts remain at the forefront of our mission. We continue to advocate tirelessly for the rights and well-being of retirees, pensioners, and older adults across the province. From advocating for affordable healthcare to championing pension security, your voices are making a significant impact, and we will persist in our efforts to enact positive change.

**Community Engagement:** Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, our community remains resilient and vibrant. Through virtual events, webinars, and online and in-person gatherings, we have fostered meaningful connections and camaraderie among members. I encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities to engage with fellow retirees, share experiences, and cultivate friendships.

**Educational Programs:** Lifelong learning is a cornerstone of our organization. We are committed to providing enriching educational programs and resources to support your intellectual growth and personal development. Whether through workshops, seminars, or online courses, we strive to offer diverse learning opportunities tailored to your interests and needs.

**Travel Insurance:** You may have heard that RTOERO has a new member benefit: trip interruption and cancellation insurance for members who aren't yet part of the RTOERO Entente Group Insurance Plan. See key questions and answers about travel insurance on the RTOERO blog here: [www.rtoero.ca/travel-insurance-for-canadians-questions-and-answers/](http://www.rtoero.ca/travel-insurance-for-canadians-questions-and-answers/)

As we look ahead to the months to come, I am filled with optimism and enthusiasm for the future of RTOERO. Together, we will continue to uphold our values, empower one another, and create a brighter tomorrow for retirees across Ontario and Canada.

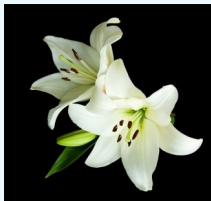
It has been a pleasure serving RTERO District 3 as President. As I move to the position of Past President, we welcome Wayne Greco as President and Rich Prophet as 1st Vice President. The District 3 Executive Board has been wonderful to work with, showing dedication to seniors and the seniors' issues in our community. Thank you once again for your unwavering support and dedication.

**Wishing you a joyful and rejuvenating spring season  
filled with laughter, love, and cherished memories.**

# OUTREACH and GOODWILL ~ Bernice Whalen

Since December 2023, we have lost too many precious members and so many of our members have been affected by loss in their families. Our hearts reach out respectfully to all experiencing loss:

**Glenn Atkinson** (husband of Joanne Atkinson),  
**Reg Beaudette** (husband of Cathy Beaudette and brother-in-law of Jacques Potvin and Joanne Zeppa),  
**Dora Cook**,  
**Lori Davies** (daughter of Rita Hammond and sister-in-law of Lesley Hammond),  
**Rose Deluco**,  
**Joseph Durica**,  
**Donald Fulton**,  
**John Gallop**,  
**Gary Huntley** (husband of Jeanne Huntley),  
**Michael Indrevold** (brother of Sharon Indrevold),  
**Bob Manson**,  
**Shirley McCarthy**,  
**James McLean**,  
**Terry McPhee** (husband of Jill McPhee),  
**Suzanne Perigord** (sister of Lucille Panco),  
**Stan Stasiuk** (husband of Marilyn Stasiuk),  
**Louise St. Eloi** (wife of Clarence St. Eloi),  
**Ida Trudeau**,  
**Ruby Vaughan**,  
**Nancy Wendt** (sister-in-law of Vi Pidgen).



*We are grateful for their  
memory, their service,  
and their friendship.*

*We extend our condolences  
to their family and friends.*

Donations in the memory of members and immediate family members were sent to the RTOERO Foundation, in accordance with our procedures. This is a Canadian registered charity which focuses upon medical strategies and research to assist aging with dignity. Sympathy cards were sent to all families. Hopefully no one has been missed. Please remember that I depend upon the **whole team** to keep me up to date. Everyone in District 3 is considered part of the Goodwill team.

Thirty-two “thinking of you cards” accompanied by a tin of tasty Bavarian cookies were distributed to our members since the November 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. They were delivered to those experiencing medical challenges. I lean heavily upon the phone callers to keep me informed so I can respond for District 3. As a District, we have tried our best to reach out to our

members experiencing health issues. We depend upon **each** one of you to keep us informed. If I have missed anyone regarding illnesses or bereavement, please let me know. **It is never too late** to indicate our caring nature. It is better to have received ten phone calls or e-mails about the same thing than to miss out comforting one of our members. Information I receive is kept private and my experience is that the invisible hug from all is greatly appreciated. Special thanks to **Marion Avery** for the extra assistance in busy times to tag team with me for cookie delivery and card writing. Much thanks as well goes to **Joyce and Page Nicolson, Bill Purnis and Florence McLeod** as well as **Chris Rous** for deliveries made. Every pair of hands truly helps! The team work is appreciated as some months get pretty hectic.

Five hospital visits were made as well as one birthday celebration of 100 years young! How wonderful to see someone dance at their 100<sup>th</sup> birthday!

Since December, 138 birthday cards were sent to those 80+. To celebrate so many birthdays certainly provides us with busy but happy District 3 endeavours. It is great to see so many enjoying the golden years. Hats off to the Birthday Committee members who continue to assist us in recognizing our seniors as they celebrate their special day. Heartfelt thanks go out to **Barbara Perry, Cathy Pirrie, and Eileen Mitchell**.

**Judy Gooderham** continues to design beautiful handmade cards for use in District 3.

To all the people who have dropped off sympathy, birthday, thinking of you and Christmas cards to my house (189 Reid St.) many, many thanks! The response continues to be unbelievable — but of course we know that **is** District 3, an area noted for being **caring**. These cards continue to keep costs down for our District and are appreciated by the people who receive them. Indeed, District 3 as a team continues to make a difference!

**Please note:** If you have moved, please call or email your new address in to RTOERO provincial membership (1.800.361.9888 OR [membership@rtoero.ca](mailto:membership@rtoero.ca)).

If you know of someone ill or needing a hug,  
please call **705.945.1074**  
or e-mail [bernicewhalen89@shaw.ca](mailto:bernicewhalen89@shaw.ca)

**Together we make a difference!**



# Ontario's Crisis in Primary Health Care

Marie DellaVedova, PAC

In late January, the Group Health Centre (GHC) in Sault Ste. Marie announced that it would reluctantly have to de-roster 10,000 patients by May 31, 2024 due to a shortage of family doctors and nurse practitioners.

While many local doctors have stayed on well past retirement, many of those who have eventually retired have not been replaced. There is a shortage of family doctors across the province, and indeed across the country. In our region, many people have been without a primary care provider for many years.

The rising number of people without primary care providers is contributing to the crisis in emergency care. Hospital emergency rooms are overflowing and wait times are dangerously high. Doctors and nurses are suffering from burn-out. Many are leaving health care professions. Fewer medical students are choosing family medicine as a profession. Healthcare costs are climbing with the rise of privatization, agency nurses, and patients who have developed serious health problems because of lack of primary health care.

In response to the recent GHC announcement, Sault Ste. Marie MPP Ross Romano said that he would set up a task force to look into the issue. The task force met on March 1 and is not scheduled to meet again until towards the end of the month.

At the time of writing, little is known about the composition of the task force. Presumably, there are a number of local doctors as well as representation from SAH and SSM City Council. It would be advantageous for front-line family doctors and nurse practitioners to have a voice since they have insights and suggestions which would be valuable to the discussion. The voices of de-rostered and

“doctor-less” community members also deserve to be heard. The focus of the task force and its action plan going forward have not been communicated to the community.

Primary care is the gateway to all healthcare. In Ontario, over 2,000,000 people do not have a family physician. Seniors, who tend to make more use of the health care system than other age groups, are particularly affected. Our well-being and quality of life are at risk when we do not have a primary health care provider.

The Ontario College of Family Physicians has released a policy paper: *Solutions for Today: Ensuring Every Ontarian Has Access to a Family Physician*. The College acknowledges that by 2025, one-in-five Ontarians may not have a doctor. It is calling for a multi-pronged approach to address the situation. The Ontario College of Family Physicians has noted that there is a “chronic and dire shortfall” of family physicians in northern and rural Ontario. The OCFP proposes a number of solutions, some of which would yield results within the next two years.

It behooves our local task force and the Ontario Ministry of Health to seriously consider the solutions proposed by front-line health care providers including the plan of action of the Ontario College of Family Physicians. The recent 2023 Ontario Budget stated that “primary care and family physicians are the foundation of the health care system.” It follows then that the doctor shortage is a crisis that needs to be addressed — NOW!

For more information, the report can be found on the Ontario College of Family Physicians website:

<https://ontariofamilyphysicians.ca/advocacy/solutions-for-today-ensuring-every-ontarian-has-access-to-a-family-physician/>

## AIDS AND APPLIANCES

This section of the Extended Health Care Plan (pages 21-22 in ENTENTE) explains the **coverage at 80%** for 18 different health care items subject to reasonable and customary fees. A written prescription and diagnosis from a physician, or where provincial legislation allows, a Nurse Practitioner, is required. Payments for aids and appliances are offset by the amount eligible for payment through various provincial government programs, for example, ADP (Assistive Devices Program) in Ontario.

Some items have maximum dollar amounts while others require pre-approval from the Claims Team.

Page Nicolson, Benefits

# Vision Screening

Barb Perry



During December and January, our RTOERO District 3 and Lions of Sault Ste Marie volunteers took a well-deserved rest from vision screening senior kindergarten students in our city and surrounding area.

In February, our Vision Screening volunteers took action again and by the time of the March General Meeting, four more schools had been serviced. A total of 105 senior kindergarten children have been seen; 40% of them were identified with possible vision issues.

By the end of May, we are optimistic of reaching our goal of providing senior kindergarten vision screening to all the ADSB and HSBCD schools in our city and nearby area.

Please know that we continue to welcome curious

RTOERO and Lion members to join us on a session to see what we are all about and perhaps consider becoming a volunteer. Vision screening is a wonderful way to have fellowship with one another while providing a worthwhile service within our community. All in all, this is a win-win opportunity for all involved.

Thank you to the following participants in vision screening since February: **Carol Amadio, Randa Coulter, Anna Filiatraut, Barb Frech, Jeanne Huntley, Cathy Hussey, Brian Janveau, DG Lion David Kidd, Lion Deborah Kidd, PDG Lion Myra Kiernan, Leslie McCauley, Eva McKenna, Kris Oliverio, RTOERO/Lion Barb Perry, Geri Piecash, Penny Tyrrel, Rita Wagner and Mary Anne Wilson.**

In addition, we welcome the newest members of our team, **Lion Maureen O'Shea and Gwyneth Wilcox.**

# Super Seniors Luncheon

Gayle Manley

**For RTOERO Members who are 85 years "young" and up: RTO District 3 Algoma would like to invite you to a luncheon on**

**Wednesday, May 8, 2024  
from 11:30 am to 2 pm  
at the Grand Gardens North,  
Great Northern Road in Sault Ste. Marie.**

It is time to celebrate the contributions of members like yourself who are 85 years young (and older) to our professions and to our organization, RTOERO.

We would like you to come to have lunch and enjoy the company of many colleagues and friends.

You will be receiving an invitation in the mail and will need to RSVP at that time. We look forward to greeting you and "Thanks for the Memories!"

**Mark Your Calendars:  
Wednesday, May 8, 2024!**



**2023  
Year-end tax tips for  
RTOERO members**



## It's tax season!

The popular **Tax Tips** document has been updated on the RTOERO website for the 2023 tax year.

Prepared by Grant Thornton LLP, this document includes tax information and tips that may be relevant to our members when preparing annual tax returns.

Go to [www.rtoero.ca/resources/tax-tips](http://www.rtoero.ca/resources/tax-tips) to find this year's **Tax Tips**.

- Remember that the premiums you pay for coverage under the RTOERO health plans are considered medical expenses for the purposes of the tax credit. This amount may be significant and should not be overlooked.
- The membership fees paid to RTOERO are not eligible for deductions as 'dues' or to be claimed as 'medical expenses' for purposes of the medical expense tax credit.



**RTO** Foundation  
**ERO** Fondation

## Monthly giving is the most impactful way to support seniors

Joining the RTOERO Foundation's **Honour Roll** by becoming a monthly donor is the most powerful way to build a better future for aging adults.

Here's how it benefits you:

- **It's easier to budget.** You decide on a manageable monthly amount and we debit that amount from your bank account on the 15th of every month.
- **Tax time is simplified.** One cumulative tax receipt will be sent to you annually.
- **Your money goes further.** A monthly gift reduces how much time is spent fundraising; more of your donation goes directly to programming.
- **Your credit card information is NOT required.** Donations can be made by simply debiting your bank account by providing a VOID cheque.

The RTOERO Foundation is grateful for the generous donors already providing a monthly gift; with a predictable cash flow, the foundation is able to focus on fulfilling their mission and implementing new projects.

For more information, contact Deanna at [dbyrtus@rtoero.ca](mailto:dbyrtus@rtoero.ca) or call 416-962-9463 ext. 271 or 1-800-361-9888.



### Wise Words Worth Wampum Moyra O'Pallie

The secret of staying young is to live honestly, eat slowly, and lie about your age. *Lucille Ball*

Middle age is when you're faced with 2 temptations, and you choose the one that will get you home by 9 o'clock. *Ronald Reagan: at age 66*



**RTO** Foundation  
**ERO** Fondation

The RTOERO Foundation is a separate entity from RTOERO with a different Board and Executive Director.

Canada's social support structures have not kept up with the changing demographics. By funding critical research and innovative programs, the RTOERO Foundation is helping to change that.

The RTOERO Foundation awards grants between \$10,000 and \$50,000 to projects that aim to improve seniors' health and wellness, promote social engagement and pursue innovative geriatrics and gerontology research.

The grants are designed with advice from experts to address the top priorities to improve quality of life as we age. The Foundation's approach is designed to help tackle urgent needs today while also creating a more age-friendly future for us all.

Grants that the Foundation funds ultimately enhance the value of older adults across Canada, connect seniors to services and have the potential to affect policy change.

Here are 4 recent recipients of Foundation grants:

**Sinai Health and University Health Network** were awarded \$49,000 for their project entitled *Co-Designing Patient Education Materials for Older Adults Living With HIV*.

**Heartland Forest Nature Experience** in the Niagara Region received \$17,500 for their *Intergenerational Nature Challenge Activities*.

**H'Art Centre's** project, *MixAbilities: Seniors Module Outreach*, has received \$25,160.

**Alzheimer Society of Ontario** received \$34,540 for their dementia resource, *Cultivating Young Dementia Advocates: A Toolkit for Youth Engagement*.

You can check out past projects online at <https://rtoero.ca/rtoero-foundation/our-work/projects-we-fund/>. As you can see, your donations support important work for older adults in Canada.

### MORE Wise Words Moyra O'Pallie

To be 70 years young is sometimes much more cheerful than to be 40 years old! *Oliver W. Holmes*

Men come to age at 60; women at 15. *James Srephens*

May you live as long as you want to, and want to as long as you live. *Irish Proverb*

# Trivia Quiz

District 3 will be hosting our first **TRIVIA QUIZ** event on April 9 at the Grand Gardens from 2-4 pm.

There will be two sessions of twenty questions each which will be based on music, art, geography and even history.

You can enter a team of two or four, and we will construct the remainder of the team.

It will be an enjoyable two hours in the afternoon with pizza, coffee and tea provided.

As we are limiting the afternoon session to 40 participants, please contact **Rich Prophet** as soon as possible.

## Trivia Samples:

1. Which country is known for the ancient ruins of Machu Picchu?  
Colombia Peru Ecuador
2. Which of these songs was a hit song for Adele?  
Hello Howdy Hi Ya
3. What is the name of Stephen King's first novel?  
The Shining Misery Carrie



**April 9 2-4 pm**  
**Grand Gardens**

**PIZZA, TEA & COFFEE provided**

Contact Rich Prophet — 705.943.6134  
OR  
richprophet1946@gmail.com

## ADVICE TO YOUR FRIENDS AND RELATIVES IN THE WORLD OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

1. Join the RTOERO health plans.
2. Exercise is excellent medicine for longevity.

Page Nicolson, District 3 Health Rep

# Travel Insurance

## Key questions and answers about travel insurance:

### *Do I need travel insurance?*

Ensuring you're adequately covered can provide peace of mind to help you enjoy your trip and reduce stress if the unexpected happens. While not required by Canadian law, travel insurance is essential to protecting you, your family and your finances.

### *Should I have insurance for a day trip across the border?*

Yes, if crossing the border for a shopping day or other activity, it's important to make sure you have medical coverage.

### *Why might I purchase multi-trip coverage vs. single trip coverage?*

If you're taking multiple trips in a year, then it's worth looking at multi-trip coverage. Remember that travel is more than major vacations – it can include weekend getaways or even cross-border shopping trips. Purchasing single-trip coverage may not be as cost-effective, and it also requires your time and attention each time you need to do it.

### *Is credit card travel insurance good enough?*

Many credit cards include both medical and trip cancellation and interruption insurance, provided the trip was booked using the credit card. This type of insurance may be sufficient for you, but don't assume it is. Always be sure to check the details – for example, there may be a maximum length of trip, or you may not be covered over a certain age. Read the limitations and exclusions carefully. You may also want to top up coverage if the coverage amounts are not enough for your needs.







Mickey Contini

## RTOERO District 3 MICKEY CONTINI AWARD OF MERIT 2024

The Award of Merit was established by RTOERO District 3 Algoma to recognize outstanding contributions to the organization. Nominees for the award will be selected in recognition of their involvement in the work of RTOERO at the National and/or District level. At the 2014 Annual General Meeting of RTOERO, the award was renamed the MICKEY CONTINI AWARD OF MERIT. This recognizes and shows appreciation for all the efforts that Mickey made on behalf of the members of RTOERO throughout the years. Mickey was not only President of District 3 Algoma, but he was also the President of RTOERO nationally.

These are the honoured past recipients:

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 2000: Barbara Lamb, Jean DuQuesnay, Leona Galloway                       | 2013: Gayle Manley               |
| 2001: Ben Smith, Grant Lawson, Jean King, John Jefferson, Orlando Sicoly | 2014: Marie Della Vedova         |
| 2003: Bill Kidd, Mary Kidd, Ken Frier, Mickey Contini                    | 2015: Bruce Avery, Page Nicolson |
| 2004: John Fleming, Maj-Liisa Donaghue                                   | 2016: Emily Noble                |
| 2005: Marilyn Patterson  | 2017: Bernice Whalen             |
| 2006: Diane Marshall, Leone Hamilton, Pat Fremlin                        | 2018: Kathy Greening             |
| 2008: Bill Purnis  | 2019: Rich Prophet               |
| 2009: Geoff Shaw   | 2020: Blair Sterling             |
| 2010: Ora Mae James, Bonnie Forsell, Moyra O'Pallie                      | 2021: Carmelina Spry             |
| 2011: Nancy Sachro   | 2022: Folgo Della Vedova         |
| 2012: Gary Wills   | 2024: ???                        |

If you wish to nominate an eligible, worthy person, please provide a description of the nominee's contributions to RTOERO locally and/or nationally.

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Submission Deadline:     | <b>Wednesday, May 1, 2024</b>  |
| Submissions are sent to: | <b>Rich Prophet</b> , RTOERO District 3, Second Vice President<br>3875 Queen Street East, Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 6X2<br><a href="mailto:richprophet1946@gmail.com">richprophet1946@gmail.com</a> |
| Presentation of Award:   | <b>District 3 Annual General Meeting: May 28, 2024</b>   |

**ADVICE  
TO YOUR FRIENDS AND RELATIVES  
IN THE WORLD OF  
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

**FOR LONGEVITY,  
MOVE - DON'T MOULDER**

Page Nicolson, District 3 Health Rep

**District 3 Scholarship  
Winner**

An RTOERO District 3 Scholarship of \$750 was awarded to

**Riya Donnelly**

of Algoma University on March 7 at the 30th Annual Student Awards Ceremony.

The criterion for selection is significant commitment to volunteering in our community over the past 18 months.

# Don't Confuse Courage with Wisdom: Caregiver Burnout and Burden OR Put On Your Oxygen Mask First

Health Insurance Workshop June 2023

Page Nicolson, District 3 Health Representative



Patricia Wendy

The presenter of the workshop, **Patricia Wendy**, is the manager of the Social Work, Hospital and Bereavement Program, Circle of Care, for Sinai Health System.

“There are only four kinds of people in the world:  
Those who have been caregivers,  
Those who are currently caregivers,  
Those who will be caregivers,  
Those who will need caregivers.”

~ Rosalynn Carter

### Some caregiver statistics:

There are 7.8 million caregivers in Canada that gave 5.7 billion hours of care in 2018. The economic value of family caregivers is estimated to be \$97.1 billion. To replace these caregivers would take 2.8 million full time equivalent workers. Ontario has 3.3 million caregivers. By 2050, there will be 35% fewer family members to perform the role of caregiver.

The important role of caregiver may cause physical or mental strain that then has serious effects on the quality of care. With reference to her clients, the speaker outlined the many types of people that fall into the role of caregiver, the kinds of stressors present, the signs of burnout, and strategies that help caregivers remain effective in their new role.

Help is available through the Ontario Caregiver Program at Helpline 1.833.416.2273. A variety of programs are available: helpful Webinars, one-on-one Peer Support, online Support Groups, the SCALE Program (Supporting Caregiver Awareness Learning and Empowerment), Caregiver Coaching Program, Online Learning Library, 90 Second Caregiver (a free, short evidence-based health letter delivered weekly to your inbox), Time to Talk Podcast, and more.

Different contact options are available in addition to the above phone number:

Email [info@ontariocaregiver.ca](mailto:info@ontariocaregiver.ca)

Phone 1.888.877.1626

[www.ontariocaregiver.ca](http://www.ontariocaregiver.ca)

**A caregiver you know might find these resources helpful.**



## Hospital and Convalescent Care Plan

**NOTE:** This is a separate plan and may be purchased separately from the Extended Health Care plan.

The **Hospital** plan assists with the cost of semi-private hospital accommodation in a licensed hospital in Canada, including active, acute rehabilitative hospitals (not homes). **You must be receiving active, acute care.** Details are found on pages 11-12 in ENTENTE.

Details about **Convalescent Facility Care** OR **Convalescent Home Care** coverage upon discharge from hospital are explained on pages 12-13 in ENTENTE.

Page Nicolson, District 3 Health Representative

# Health Care: Letter sent to MPPs Romano and Mantha

Copied to Sheila Jones, Minister of Health, and France Gelinias, Opposition Health Critic

As your constituents, the members of RTOERO District 3 thank you for your representation in the Ontario Legislature.

RTOERO is a bilingual trusted voice on healthy, active living in the retirement journey for the broader education community. RTOERO has more than 84000 members in 51 districts across Canada. District 3 Algoma has over 1200 members, the vast majority of whom are seniors. Health care is of paramount concern to our members.

Unparalleled ER wait times have been in the news. At the end of November, Sault Area Hospital reported that its ED was “experiencing a high volume of patients, sicker patients, staffing shortages and limited inpatient beds.” While hospitals prioritize the most urgent cases, other patients have long waits - in hallways, waiting rooms ... wherever space can be found. Medical examinations are done in plain view and hearing range of people nearby. Patients, already distressed, lose privacy and dignity in these unacceptable situations. Recent reporting indicates that in Ontario one of every ten people admitted from an emergency department is waiting at least two days for a hospital bed. This is unprecedented. And dangerous.

Along with overcrowding and long wait times in Emergency Departments, there is the crisis in care caused by the closures of Emergency Departments altogether. In Algoma, the Thessalon Hospital temporarily closed its emergency department several times last summer. It was reported that last year, Ontario's ERs and urgent care centres were temporarily closed more than 1,000 times due to staff shortages. Some ERs in rural areas, such as in Minden, have closed permanently.

It is more than an inconvenience to have to drive farther to the next emergency department. When prompt treatment matters, lives may be in jeopardy. As well, numerous people without family doctors are forced to seek primary medical care, including prescription renewals, at an emergency department. ER closures and lengthy wait times affect access to care and health outcomes. This particularly affects seniors who often deal with issues related to health and transportation. In northern Ontario, where distances between emergency departments can be hundreds of kilometres and weather conditions frequently hamper travel, ER closures disproportionately put northern lives at risk.

Recent Ontario legislation allows for the publicly funded expansion of private hospitals. Such tax-payer funded private clinics will draw staff from underfunded public hospitals and further deplete hospital staff, thereby contributing to the hospital crisis. In addition, for-profit staffing agencies, promising nurses better working conditions and better pay, entice them from the strained public system. Hospitals, requiring more nurses, are hiring agency nurses and paying them twice as much or more as they pay their staff nurses. Many agency nurses are former staff nurses who have left untenable work environments and poorer paying positions in public hospitals. Last year, the number and cost of agency hours increased dramatically. “Costs to the public purse more than tripled to \$174 million from \$38 million.” (*Toronto Star*, Oct. 19, 2023) At the same time as the government flows millions of tax-payer dollars to independent health facilities and private agencies, it is reducing its funding to public health care. Why not invest sufficient public money in public health care? **Ontario funds its hospitals at the lowest rate in Canada.** That funding doesn't even match inflation. Yet public money is going toward the expansion of for-profit clinics.

Without sufficient funding and staff, wait times will continue to increase, hospital emergency rooms will continue to close and operating rooms that we have paid for will continue to sit empty on weekends and evenings, or permanently. Private clinics will flourish at the taxpayer's expense. While our public hospitals struggle.

The Auditor General's report in December, 2023 stated that Ontario lacks a province-wide strategy to avoid emergency room closures. This is of grave concern to our members. Private clinics do not provide emergency care. Public hospitals do.

Will the government develop a long-range, comprehensive plan to keep our public hospitals functioning? Or is it, in fact, orchestrating their demise?

We look forward to hearing from you regarding a strategy to address emergency room closures.

Regards,  
Marie DellaVedova, Political Advocacy Coordinator, RTOERO District 3 Algoma

## District 3 Retirement Planning Workshop

A very successful Retirement Planning Workshop (RPW) was held on March 2 at The Water Tower Inn. The call for interested participants attracted almost 90 in attendance. They were welcomed by President **Chris Rous**, followed by **Gayle Manley** speaking about some of the activities we do in District 3.

The presenter from RTOERO, Stephen Wong, spoke about various things to consider when planning for retirement, including income sources and selecting a health plan.

The two-hour session included a light breakfast and draws at the end for a variety of items.

Feedback was very positive, and one person remarked that it was the first workshop he went to that made sense.



## Attention District 3! Community Grants

All RTOERO Districts can support and partner with local organizations to promote projects that will help our organization to meet our strategic goals of

- \* improving the lives of members and seniors;
- \* being the trusted voice for the broader education communities;
- \* and broadening our membership base.

Since the inception of this grant 24 years ago, we have donated \$1.95 million for 598 projects.

This year, RTOERO Districts are eligible to receive grants of up to \$4,000 for community projects that advance these strategic goals. Districts interested will serve as the project sponsor and will submit the application for a Community Grant either in partnership with a community organization or on behalf of the district.

Have an idea for a project? Details for suitable projects can be found on the RTOERO homepage.

Need support or have questions? Contact: [waynegreco@gmail.com](mailto:waynegreco@gmail.com)

**Deadline for submission to [wayne-greco@gmail.com](mailto:wayne-greco@gmail.com) no later than April 19.**

Only ONE project will be endorsed by the District 3 Executive.

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