

CanAge Connections

CanAge is Canada's national advocacy organization for older adults. We work to advance the rights and well-being of Canadians as we age in order to live vibrant and connected lives. This is the December edition of our monthly newsletter.



CEO, CanAge
Laura Tamblyn Watts

Happy Holidays!

A Message from Laura

Thank you for standing with CanAge during our first year of operation! With our many partners and supporters we have accomplished so much and have had meaningful conversations from coast to coast. People are listening, and they are looking to CanAge to answer important questions. We've worked with seniors, policy makers, researchers, practitioners, clinicians, journalists and change-makers, all united with us to better the lives of older adults.

I hope you and your loved ones celebrate as best you can, find some joy and fellowship during the holidays, and that the coming winter is gentle with us all.

Warmly,

Laura



Welcome to CanAge's Winter Wellness Wonderland

The 2020 holiday season will be very different than what we are normally accustomed to. However, at CanAge we strive to provide hope, positivity and encouragement through these difficult times.

As a result, we have put together a list of virtual attractions from around the world. [CanAge.ca/wellness](https://www.canage.ca/wellness) provides live streaming concerts for the holiday season, as well as other events that you can safely enjoy from the comfort of your home.

Visit our Winter Wellness Wonderland at [CanAge.ca/wellness](https://www.canage.ca/wellness).



Government Relations

The Difference between Advocacy and Policy

The pandemic taught us as a country that no one single organization or government can “fix” seniors’ issues. It takes individuals, communities, caregivers, professionals, all levels of government, and multiple ministries within each government - all working together across a wide range of issues that range in size from national down to a single home or family. How do you make sense of all of these issues and people and organizations? How do you get anything done? That is where policy comes in.

Policy

Policy is identifying a problem together with an idea about how best to improve something for the largest number of people. That last part is important. A doctor may diagnose you as being iron deficient and prescribe you vitamins. That helps one person. Health policy tries to figure out how to get everyone to eat better so they don’t need vitamins. Policy is a wish, a hope, an “ask” that you make the case for.

Policy Example



An excellent example of collaborative policy creation is our VOICES of Canada’s Seniors publication. In it, we identify six critical issues affecting older adults and 135 recommendations about how best to address them. We conducted research and held many consultations with seniors themselves, researchers, academics, clinicians, and practitioners in the field of aging. Once ready, we shared the document with partners across the country and received endorsements from them.

Advocacy

Advocacy is the active persuasion, lobbying or campaigning to make a government care about your problem, and rationale, and methods and take a step towards your recommendations. Advocacy includes letter writing, establishing meetings and other points of contact, including allies in your outreach, utilizing social media, holding a press conference, etc.

Advocacy Example

Having established our VOICES policy publication, CanAge shared it with federal and provincial ministers of health, finance, and long-term care. We then met with many of them, at their request. We issued a press release, did an extensive media relations campaign, and launched a webinar series attended by allies across the country. We sent the federal minister of finance a pre-budget submission that outlined what investments needed to be made to improve conditions for older adults. It is important for advocates to know the submission cycles of government so as to not miss an opportunity to shape policy, and to fulfill your organization’s mission.



It all starts the same way. We identify an issue. We describe why it is important. To convince a third party like the government, we do a deeper dive into the economic costs and benefits. Then we have to do our research, find and identify our allies, our thought leaders, and our potential critics. In short, the process is pretty easy:



- Identify your goal, the thing that needs to change and why it is important.
- Invite other stakeholders to get on board.
- Find a strategy that can work for those who may be opposed to your goal.
- Create recommendations, do formal pre-budget submissions, talk to other policymakers, raise awareness, do what you have to do to get your message heard.



Forced Back into the Closet

Submitted by **Jennifer Boyce**
Communications Director at **Egale**

Across Canada we recognize some seniors and older persons as being marginalized, facing issues of abuse, homelessness and poverty among other challenges. It is less often that we go a step further to look at the unique issues and barriers impacting LGBTQI2S seniors, which are compounded due to a lifetime of experiencing different forms of oppressions including homophobia, heterosexism, transphobia, sexism, and agism.

Some of the most notable challenges faced by LGBTQI2S seniors are revealed in [Egale's National LGBTQI2S Seniors Community Consultation](#) (2017). In the community consultation, it was found that over half (52%) of senior respondents and two-thirds of service providers agreed the top issue with the largest perceived impact on LGBTQI2S seniors is the fear of being "forced back into the closet" in residential care.

For many LGBTQI2S seniors, the fear of being forced back into the closet has become a reality. Over 40% of LGBTQI2S seniors have not come out to their health care providers due to the fear of being discriminated against (2017). It is crucial that we work together to break down these barriers to ensure older LGBTQI2S people are afforded the same freedoms they have fought so hard to make a reality for younger generations.

Egale Canada provides many great supports and resources for older LGBTQI2S people, from our [Rainbow Table](#) community forum to help alleviate social isolation and loneliness for older LGBTQI2S people, to resources like [Crossing the Rainbow Bridge](#), a guide to support with unique end-of-life planning challenges, and [more](#). Learn more at [Egale.ca](#).

December is Human Rights Awareness Month!

[Universal Human Rights Day](#) is observed every year on December 10th. [Know your rights](#) and help spread the word. Read the United Nations [Principles for Older Persons](#). Learn how the rights of older persons are being protected on a [national](#) and [international](#) level. For suggestions on how you can take part in Human Rights Day, visit [Canada.ca](#).

In the News

CanAge is the go-to organization when journalists seek comment about the issues affecting older Canadians. Here are some recent highlights.

[CTV News](#)

Extendicare says delays in getting test results contributed to COVID-19 outbreak at Starwood. When the budget came out quite recently, we were all looking to see where those infrastructure and staffing investments were going to be coming from. The government has been talking about four hours of care and then no money was actually allocated to it in the budget," said Laura Tamblyn Watts

[Read more at CanAge.ca/media](#)

[The Toronto Star](#)

'An attractive investment:' As private equity scoops up Ontario nursing homes, there are concerns about whether profit-driven facilities can best care for fragile seniors. "The issue that we have to grapple with is, what are we designing long-term care to achieve?" said Laura Tamblyn Watts, CEO of national seniors' advocacy organization CanAge. "You can't blame private equity for doing what private equity does, which is squeeze every single dollar out of what they invest. But that is not what we want for residents in long-term care. And that is the critical problem."

[Read more at CanAge.ca/media](#)

For full media coverage visit [CanAge.ca/media](#)



How to Holiday Safely during the Pandemic



Submitted by **Sonal Purohit**
Community Pharmacist in Manitoba

The 2020 holiday season will look and feel remarkably unlike any other. This year's season is complicated, not only with influenza, but with the complexity and uncertainty of the coronavirus. We won't have the freedom to safely socialize as we customarily do.

As a health care provider, the best advice I can offer my patients is that the safest way to celebrate the holiday season this year is to celebrate with the people in your own household. Here I suggest some ways you can have fun and stay healthy.

Lifestyle

It's especially important to keep a strong immune system this year. Consider:



- Exercise daily.
- Get enough sleep.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Stay hydrated.
- Maintain a healthy weight.

Diet



While it's generally safe to take a multivitamin, the best approach to preventing illnesses is to eat a diet that is high in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, healthy fats, and lean proteins to provide your body with the best variety of nutrients, including vitamins A, C, D, and E. It is important to always talk to your health care provider or pharmacist before taking any supplements to determine if they are safe to be taken with your health needs.

Holiday Activities

Alternative activities that pose lower risk of spreading COVID-19 which can make your holiday season enjoyable and memorable include:



- Participate in a virtual holiday celebration with friends and family.
- Watch movies, make crafts, play board games, bake and cook with the people in your household.
- Make a photo album or a family tree.
- Connect with your friends and family virtually or by telephone.

Together, we can make this year's holiday season a safe and enjoyable one. I strongly encourage everyone to please value and adhere to the imperative fundamentals which have been specified by our top health care providers which will help to flatten the curve of COVID-19: Wear a mask, physical distancing and practice good hand hygiene.

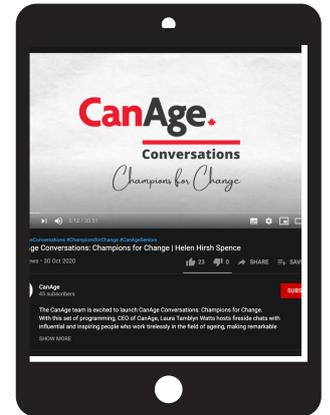
Happy Holidays!



CanAge Conversations

CanAge Champion for Change

Laura Tamblyn Watts, CanAge CEO, spoke with Helen Hirsh Spence, CEO of Top Sixty Over Sixty, about her career, why she started Top Sixty Over Sixty, her passion for older adults, and the importance of practicing gratitude in one's life. Watch the episode on our YouTube channel! [CanAge.ca/youtube](https://www.canage.ca/youtube).



CEO, Top Sixty Over Sixty
Helen Hirsh Spence



CanAge Director of Communications
& Knowledge Mobilization
Lisa Hartford

New Launch: Personal Portraits

The CanAge team is excited to launch the latest edition of CanAge Conversations: Personal Portraits, hosted by Lisa Hartford, Director of Communications and Knowledge Mobilization at CanAge.

This set of programming follows Lisa with personal interviews of everyday people doing - or who have done - extraordinary and encouraging things. Uplifting, positive and enlightening, join Lisa as she delves into the personal lives of her guests gathering wisdom and hope for us all. Visit [CanAge.ca/portraits](https://www.canage.ca/portraits).

Watch on Youtube

November 5, 2020

Click to [here](#) to watch our interview with Wing Commander William Morgan (retired) of the Royal Canadian Air Force.

November 10, 2020

Click [here](#) to watch our interview with Chief Steward Percival Smith (retired) of the British Merchant Navy.

November 11, 2020

Click [here](#) to watch a Special Father Daughter Interview with Lisa Hartford and her Dad, Major Wallace Morgan (retired) of the Royal Canadian Air Force.

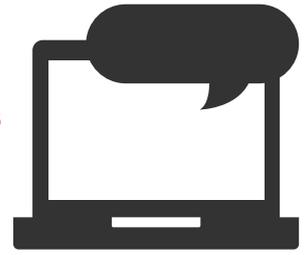
Personal Portraits: In Honour of our Veterans

November 5 - 11, 2020 was **Veterans' Week**. CanAge honoured those who have served Canada, past and present, in times of war, military conflict and peace. Our tribute consisted of 3 Personal Portraits interviews with veterans, hosted by Lisa Hartford.

You can find all the episodes on CanAge's YouTube Channel, visit [CanAge.ca/youtube](https://www.canage.ca/youtube).



You Asked, We Answered



Q.

I am an independent home support provider for seniors - cleaning, help with meal prep, companionship, etc. and I provide receipts. Can people use these receipts for income tax filing purposes? I have seen many benefits to keeping seniors in their homes as long as possible. Thank you for your help.

A.

This is outside of our area of expertise, but we sought advice from a CPA. Here is what she suggests. "I know if you pay for instance for your parents to live in a senior care facility there is a form to complete to be able to claim it as your expense. If a senior citizen is having a nurse to visit them at home it's a medical expense and deductible as long as it is more than 3% of the individual's income. For hospitality services, I don't think so, but I suggest calling CRA and asking. I haven't had a case like that to know for sure. So essentially it is important for any caregiver or individual to contact CRA."

Have a question for CanAge? Submit it via newsletter@CanAge.ca.

Upcoming Events



www.GivingTuesday.ca

December 1st: Giving Tuesday

Created in response to Black Friday and Cyber Monday, Giving Tuesday offers an opportunity to give back and donate to your favourite charities. For more information visit givingtuesday.ca

December 2nd, 9th and 16th: LEGACY Summit

The Evolution of Estate Planning Virtual Summit Series or Your Evolving Legacy: Honoring and Protecting the Wisdom of Your Legacy. For more information visit legacyplanningsummit.com/



December 3rd, 8th and 10th: Save your Skin Summit

This 5th annual patient education and awareness Summit is a joint project between [Save Your Skin Foundation](http://SaveYourSkinFoundation.com) and the [Canadian Psoriasis Network](http://CanadianPsoriasisNetwork.com). This year, [Value-Based Healthcare Canada](http://ValueBasedHealthcareCanada.com) (an initiative of the Conference Board of Canada) joins as the co-host of our session on value-based health care. For more information and to register visit pheedloop.com/patients/site/home/

FREE 1 Year CanAge Membership

We'd love to have you join CanAge for **FREE for 1 year**. You can become a member of CanAge at **NO COST** to you.

We are currently building a robust portfolio of benefit partners for CanAge members. We want to learn what you'd like us to provide in terms of membership discounts and opportunities, custom-curated experiences, and of course what issues are important to you, that we should advocate for.

If you would like to be part of our CanAge Community, participating in online events, online surveys, and polls, as well as other CanAge initiatives, then take advantage of this founding membership offer. We'd love to have you be part of CanAge.

Visit CanAge.ca/join to

Join Us!