

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

**EDUCATION & HEALTH**



**DATE: October 4, 2016**

**Communique #3**

*One Heart, One Voice, One Mission*

TO: Diocesan Chairpersons of Education and Health  
CC: Provincial Executive (for information)  
CC: National Chairperson of Education and Health (for information)

FROM: Linda VdB, Provincial Chairperson of Education and Health  
ATT: Members of the Catholic Women's League, Provincial

At the last Grouard-McLennan diocesan executive meeting, there was some heavy discussion surrounding the latest hot topics: euthanasia, palliative care, the Alberta Health Act and what our Catholic Women's League is trying to do to support life. It became clear that our sisters in the League care deeply for the elderly and those being threatened by government legislation allowing assisted death. Overwhelming emotions drive us to write letters, send postcards, and speak to our representatives in government, and yet. It is also evident that much more work needs to be done.

The Education and Health portfolio is one of considerable responsibility these days. Four out of the five resolutions passed at the National Convention involve Health care in one form or another:

**2016.02 Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide.** This food guide was last revised in 2007. The question is – are these guidelines still healthy? The national council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada resolves to urge the federal government to revise Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide using evidence-based guidelines, to set policy to review the guide every five years and to publish the date of revision on the guide. As members of the League we are being asked to:

- 1) Write letters to the Prime Minister and Minister of Health with copies to our local member of parliament urging the federal government to revise the Guide as requested in the resolution.
- 2) Hold a speaker presentation on healthy living and food choices.
- 3) Educate members about the food guide and encourage healthy food choices.
- 4) Monitor the federal government's response to the request contained in the resolution.

**2016.03 Warning Labels on Food and Drug Products for all Inactive Substances and Additives.** The national council resolves to urge the federal government to require detailed warning labels on food and drug products containing all inactive substances and additives that may cause adverse reactions; to require that patient information sheets accompanying pharmaceuticals include

a list of all inactive substances and potential adverse reactions; and to engage in a program of public education focusing on the possible adverse effects of all inactive substances and additives. The action plan for all members includes:

- 1) Write letters to the Prime Minister, Minister of Health and local members of parliament, asking for adequate warning labels on food and drug products containing all inactive substances and additives that may cause adverse reactions; that patient information sheets accompanying pharmaceuticals include a list of all inactive substances and potential adverse reactions; and to support a program of public education focusing on the possible adverse effects of all inactive substances and additives.
- 2) Raise members' awareness of the danger of possible adverse reactions to inactive substances and additives in drug and food products.
- 3) Monitor the federal government's response to the request contained in the resolution food and drug products.

#### **2016.04 Amend the Canada Health Act to Identify Palliative Care as an Insured Health Service.**

The national convention assembled, urges the federal government to identify palliative care as an insured health service covered under the Canada Health Act; and to develop a national strategy for uniform standards and delivery of palliative care as defined by the World Health Organization; and that the provincial councils urge their provincial/territorial governments to provide palliative care as an insured service covered under their provincial/territorial health act as deemed prudent/necessary. The action plan is to involve:

- 1) Write to the prime minister, federal minister of health and our member of parliament urging them to identify palliative care as an insured health service covered under the Canada Health Act, and to develop a national strategy for uniform standards and delivery of palliative care as defined by the World Health Organization.
- 2) Educate members and the community at large on the importance of high quality palliative care.
- 3) Monitor federal government's response to the request of this resolution.

#### **2016.05 Amend the Canada Health Act to Include Home Care as an Insured Health Service.**

The national council of the Catholic Women's League of Canada, resolves to urge the federal government to amend the Canada Health Act to include home care as an insured health service. Members are being asked to:

- 1) Write the Prime Minister, Minister of Health and members of parliament urging them to include home care in the Canada Health Act.
- 2) Initiate a petition among CWL members requesting the government include home care in the Canada Health Act.
- 3) As a member, study the Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care report "Not to be Forgotten, Care of Vulnerable Canadian," as well as publications from Catholic Organization for Life and Family that deal with vulnerable people (e.g. "Families, Christ Calls us to sow joy and hope!")
- 4) Support local hospices financially as well as volunteering.
- 5) Co-ordinate assistance to disabled and elderly (housework, cooking, appointments, shopping, etc.)
- 6) Invite speakers to a meeting that will educate members on home care services that are available in the community.
- 7) Monitor the federal government's response to the request contained in the resolution.

As you can see, there is much to do. We all run the risk of feeling overwhelmed. Therefore, I suggest that you choose one of the resolutions to begin with, something dear to your heart and begin there. Ask a sister in the League to join you in your work. Talk to people at your church and at your work about what you are doing. Invite them to join you. Just begin!

Dr. Nuala Kenny spoke at the 2016 National Convention of the Catholic Women's League. Her talk on understanding physician assisted death and palliative care is highly recommended. You may find it at the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akVyDEMetlg>

**Newman Theological College** is offering an online program (2 years), a certificate of Catholic Studies in International Development. Year 1 will be the Foundations of the Faith and the second year includes courses on Faith and International Development. The evolving role of the Church in the World, and an overview of some of the different Catholic organizations like CCODP involved in such work. The courses are populated with a lot of content from CCODP or from Caritas International, and participants are also encouraged to volunteer with a local chapter.

The Catholic Women's League has a National Bursary for such programs and course in theology and/or spiritual and faith development. The deadline for the next submission is November 30 and the form can be found on the National website at <http://cwl.ca/resources/forms/>

Be encouraged to take the time to educate yourself on the latest topics. Share what you learn with others and take action on what you believe.

God bless us all.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda VdB

Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Education and Health Standing Committee