



ADVOCATE

ACR: The Association of Advocates for Care Reform

~ in Long Term Care Since 1991 ~

THE ASSOCIATION OF
ADVOCATES FOR CARE
REFORM IS DEDICATED
TO IMPROVING THE
QUALITY OF LIFE AND
CARE FOR RESIDENTS
OF LONG-TERM CARE
FACILITIES IN
BRITISH COLUMBIA

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**Association of Advocates
for Care Reform
Annual General Meeting**
Saturday June 04, 2005
10.00am to 12.00pm
Little Mountain Place
330 East 36th Ave

**Volunteer... contact ACR
to find out how you can
make a contribution of
time and talent!**

News from the Board

As the new Board came together last September, we determined that ACR was at a crossroads in establishing itself as a prime voice for one of the fastest growing population sectors in British Columbia. The Board has identified four goals for 2005:

1. To promote and support the development of Family Councils in Residential Care Facilities in British Columbia
2. To advocate to improve the Quality of Care and Quality of Life for residents of Residential Care Facilities in British Columbia
3. To increase the ACR profile
4. To increase the ACR membership

To achieve these goals, a plan and associated proposal for funding was developed by the Board. This proposal, coordinated by Tom Park, was submitted to a funding agency for approval, which was granted. (These funds had been transferred to ACR from a sister organization SPRY, when it was dissolved.)

ACR is now putting the plan in action. Outreach activities in support of Family Councils and steps to increase the profile of ACR are in progress and will be launched in the Fall.

Our membership is our strength and support. The Annual General Meeting will be held at Little Mountain Place (in Vancouver) on June 4, 2005 at 10 am. Further details on the AGM and our exceptional speaker, are elsewhere in this newsletter.

A reminder that Membership fees are now due. (A renewal form is in this newsletter and they will also be available at the AGM.)

*On behalf of the Board and Yours in Advocacy,
Helen Shore*

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Family Council Update

The establishment and support of Family Councils in Residential Care Facilities throughout British Columbia is a primary focus for ACR. We were pleased to learn that Ontario and most recently Manitoba have now legislated the establishment of Family Councils in Residential Care Facilities in those Provinces and it is our hope that British Columbia will do the same.

In January, a Family Council Workshop on Communication, with an emphasis on Listening skills was held in Vancouver and facilitated by Lesley Taylor. Interest in the development of Family Councils is growing and representatives from ACR have been invited by a number of facilities in the Greater Vancouver area to talk to families and

administrators about the benefits of Family Councils and how to get them started.

If you are associated with a Residential Care Facility and interested in learning about Family Councils please give us a call. We are committed to providing support throughout the Province. In the Fall we are planning on conducting workshops in Victoria and the Interior on the development of Family Councils. Contact the ACR message line (604-732-7734) or e-mail us at advocatesforcarereform@shaw.ca.

We are interested in hearing what your Family Council is doing – your ideas, successes, challenges and suggestions on how we can provide support. Sharing of ideas and best practices is a valuable resource for both new and existing Family Councils.

Residential Dental Care – Progress!

Great progress has been made in the provision of geriatric dental care for the fortunate residents of thirteen Residential Care Facilities within the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority.

The ELDERS (Elders Link with Dental Education, Research and Service) Group at the UBC Faculty of Dentistry was amongst the first to document oral health problems in Residential Care Facilities and explore ways of addressing care needs, from preventive strategies, to education for residential care staff, to provision of a geriatric dental care program.

A joint venture between the UBC Faculty of Dentistry and Providence Health Care started in 2002 to provide much needed dental care to the residents of five Providence Health Care facilities has now expanded to thirteen facilities within the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (VCHA). Funding for the operating budget comes from the BC Ministry of Health and the VCHA and the model is based upon fee-for-service delivery of dental care.

Mobile dental equipment is used to provide exams and basic dental care at bedside. More complex treatment is provided at clinics within the hospitals (e.g. Langara and Brock Fahrni) and the UBC Specialty Clinic. Education of hospital nursing staff, residents, their families, dental students and dentists is an important component of the program. In addition, a dental hygienist reviews residence protocols, recommends oral hygiene products and monitors the provision of

daily mouth care for residents. The educational program for nurses and care aides is based on the UBC ELDERS Group educational package "Mouthcare for Persons in Residential Care" that includes manuals, a PowerPoint presentation, and an interactive CDROM. (Contact for this material: Judy Laird 604-822-5064).

Those interested in having this successful model of geriatric dental care implemented at their Residential Care Facility are encouraged to contact their Regional Health Authority. For additional information on the Program, contact the Program Manager, Geriatric Dentistry Program, Ms. Shunhau To Tel: 604-822-8064 Fax: 604-822-7736 Email: ubcphc@interchange.ubc. The website for the Faculty of Dentistry is www.dentistry.ubc.ca

Association of Advocates for Care Reform
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Date: Saturday, 04 June 2005

Time: 10.00 – Noon

Location: Little Mountain Place

330 East 36 Avenue, Vancouver BC
(one block east of Main Street)

Guest Speaker: Paddy Rodney

Patricia (Paddy) Rodney, RN, MSN, PhD, is an Associate Professor with the University of Victoria School of Nursing (located on the Lower Mainland Campus). She is a Faculty Associate with the Mary and Maurice Young Centre for Applied Ethics at UBC, a Research Associate with Providence Health Care Ethics Services, and Chair of the Canadian Nurses Association Ethics Committee. She is currently a member of the ethics committee at BC Women's Hospital and a past member of the ethics committee at St. Paul's Hospital, both in Vancouver, BC.

Paddy's research and publications focus on end-of-life decision-making and the culture of health care delivery. She has a particular interest in nurses' moral agency and the difficulties that nurses and other health care professionals experience in the current moral climate of health care delivery. Paddy's research and scholarship has also addressed care of older adults.

*Light refreshments will be served.
New and Renewal Memberships will be available.*

Speaking Out

Advocates for Care Reform (ACR) was part of a panel presentation on the CBC radio "Taking Care" series twice in 2004. Phil Lyons, Seniors Network BC, Nancy Chiavario, West End Seniors and Helen Shore, ACR, were panel members. The challenges that seniors are experiencing with Home Care, Assisted Living and Long Term Care were presented. Many independent senior voices were also heard from the large and vocal phone-in audience. Seniors spoke of their growing concerns with government cutbacks, broken promises and their growing need for better answers for BC seniors.

In December 2004, a group of ten Liberal MLA backbenchers met with representatives of several seniors' organizations at 411 Seniors Centre in Vancouver. In this pre-election exercise, the MLA's asked to hear what the key issues were that were affecting seniors in BC. Their stated goal was to forward these views to Cabinet for action on these issues. Helen Shore, ACR, spelled out in detail the effects of current government policies and cutbacks on frail seniors who are occupying the decreased number of long term care residential beds in BC. The complex medical and care needs of frail seniors in residential care were described. Staff shortages and cuts in support services (recreation therapists, social workers, physiotherapists, occupational and music therapists) result in lower quality and standards of care, less mobilization of residents, fewer opportunities for socialization, less mental stimulation, and an increase in diapering, poor nutrition and inadequate hydration.

Joyce Jones, co-chair of the Seniors Network spoke on the negative impact of cutbacks to Home Support. In addition she noted the loss of 1800 long term and intermediate care beds, the lack of a voice for seniors at the provincial level, no office for Seniors and no longer a Seniors' Advisory Committee to draw attention to seniors' issues and concerns.

The MLA's requested suggestions that they could take back to Cabinet. Practical and detailed suggestions were made. The chair of the Seniors' Caucus Committee, Gordon Hogg, indicated that minutes and recommendations would go to Cabinet and that all participants would be notified. He made it clear that any changes would not take place until after the election.

The BC Ministry of Health Services began a formal review of the Regulations for Community Care Licensing in the fall of 2004. Advocates for Care Reform provided input in two ways. A complete and extensive response to their questionnaire by ACR Board members was coordinated and submitted by Jo Steckler, ACR Board member. An ACR Board member, Gwen Roland attended a focus group that was coordinated by a Consultant on behalf of the Ministry of Health. In addition, ACR assisted the participation by members of Family Councils on these focus groups.

Failure to Thrive – Misdiagnosis?

Saint Vincent's Hospital Foundation sponsored its third annual British Columbia Geriatric Service Conference for Physicians, Nurses and all members of Interdisciplinary Teams on March 4, 2005, in Vancouver. The theme was "Best Clinical Practices - from Prevention to Palliation" and the workshops covered a broad range of topics. Dr. Larry Dian, who is head of the Division of Geriatric Medicine at the University of BC and the head of geriatric medicine at Vancouver Hospital, was one of the keynote speakers. His chosen topic to start off the Conference was "Failure to Thrive".

The diagnosis of "failure to thrive" in older adults is a term that has often been used when health care professionals just don't know what to do and typically leads to giving up on the patient. Dr. Dian's first slide challenged the use of this diagnosis by suggesting it had outlived its usefulness – an approach welcomed by many in the geriatric community. Dr. Dian outlined the history of the diagnosis, which began to be used in the late 1960's and later in 1991, was given full status as a bona fide diagnosis and defined as "a syndrome of weight loss, decreased appetite, poor nutrition and inactivity often accompanied by dehydration, depression and impaired immune function".

Dr. Dian took each "bit" of this definition by turn and described how a thoughtful and careful medical assessment could be used to unmask what was happening with the person. Most importantly, he explained how likely it was that the person's condition came about from the interactions among several underlying different problems. By illustrating his presentation with a case study, it was clear how careful assessment of a person can lead to more accurate diagnosis, appropriate treatment for multiple conditions, and sometimes very good results. His

presentation ended with a wonderful image of a robust older man returning to a life of activity and engagement after the failure to thrive diagnosis had been removed, a thorough assessment done, and the real problems identified and treated.

His presentation was a powerful and exciting example of how a challenge to a well-established geriatric diagnosis and a continuing dialogue on health care for seniors can lead to positive change and thoughtful, individualized care.

For further information on the St. Vincent's Foundation and future activities see: <http://www.stvincentsfoundation.ca>

Did You Know....?

ACR is the only organization in BC that specifically advocates for people living in Residential Care Facilities. Those who call Residential Care Facilities their home are not only seniors but also those of younger years - some with Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinsons, ALS, as well as those who have suffered strokes or been affected by the progression of other diseases such as kidney disease and diabetes.

To continue and expand our work, ACR needs your support and active involvement – through membership, donations, volunteering on committees or as a Board member, through sharing your Family Council news, through submission of articles for our Newsletter. We welcome your feedback, ideas and suggestions.

Want to know how to contact us?
Call 604-732-7734 or email advocatesforcarereform@shaw.ca



Thanks to All Supporters of ACR

We would like to send a big "Thank You" to all our supporters. Over the last few months, we have received membership renewals for 2005, as well as donations and new memberships, from the following individuals and organizations:

Lori Amdam, Donna Baron, C.H.A.T. Family Council, Bruce Chown, Mike Collins, Lidja Cowan, Deltaview Habilitation Centre, Jane Devji, Margaret Eagleson, Alice Edge, Fraserview Intermediate Care Lodge, Aline Frewer, Patricia Fulton, Judy Gaudin-Riese, Kathleen Hamilton, Haro Park Centre, Mary Hill, Evelyn Huffman, Dorothy Jones, Kinsmen Retirement Centre Family Council, Anne Kloppenborg, Eileen Kosarek, Lorraine Kuchinka, Jean Lapage, Phil Lyons, Ron McLeod (Greater Vancouver Community Services Society), Donna-Mae Moore, Lucie Moore, Carol Mothersill, Maggie Mullins, Brenda Newell, Ione Owen, Tom Park, Janet Robertson, Gwen Roland, Ingrid Ross, Wendy Searcy (Peace Arch Hospital ECU Family Council), Helen Shore, Jo Steckler, Elaine Stolar, Fiona Sudbury, Lesley Taylor, Mish Vadasz, Sheila Wilkinson.

And a very special thanks to the HYDRECS Fund and the Vancouver Marpole Lions Club for their most generous donations.

We appreciate your continued interest in and support for the Association of Advocates for Care Reform.

Newsletter Committee

Kathleen Hamilton, JoAnn Perry, Gwen Roland, Helen Shore

Opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of ACR or its members. Material is reported as a matter of interest.