

**Report to RTO/ERO Provincial Political Action Committee  
Janet Poudrier and Donna Reid**

It was our pleasure and honour to represent our PAC committee at the  
**ONTARIO ELDER ABUSE CONFERENCE 2007**

Sponsored by the

**Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, ONPEA  
Held on Monday, February 26, 2007 & Tuesday, February 27, 2007  
At the Doubletree International Plaza Hotel, 655 Dixon Road, Toronto, Ontario**

**THE ONE ABUSE NOBODY SEES...A CALL TO ACTION**

**INTRODUCTION**

This conference is an excellent forum for looking at many issues that affect the lives of elders who may be at risk. **“Elder abuse is defined as any action or inaction by self or others that jeopardizes the health or well being of any older adult.”**

ONPEA supports a three pronged approach to prevention of elder abuse

1. Co-ordination of services among those available in a community
2. Training for staffs dealing with elders
3. Public education programs to raise awareness

**Monday, February 26, 2007**

**PLENARY PRESENTATION: House Calls with my Camera: A physician’s approach to the multidisciplinary community and home-based care of frail seniors as they age in place – Dr. Mark Nowaczynski, Community and Home-based Geriatric Primary Care Physician, Toronto, ON**

A highlight of the conference was a presentation by Dr. Mark Nowaczynski titled, House Calls with my Camera. His approach is to use photography to tell the stories of the lives and struggles of elders who are homebound. He gave out the following statistics:

- 80 plus are the fastest growing group in Ontario
- 1 million over 80+ seniors will live in their homes
- 1930’s 40% of doctor/patient encounters were house calls
- by 1980, 0.6% were house calls and they continue to drop despite increase in home care
- by the 1990’s due to hospital mergers and bed closures home care has exploded and is now the fastest growing health care sector with no new money
- Chronic services for seniors are fragmented, inadequate, neglected and under funded

- Massive investment in LTC beds forcing seniors prematurely into nursing homes
- No National Home Care Program because it does not fall under the Canada Health Act
- Home Care is more effective and less costly because it is patient centred and focuses on improving quality of life at home and decreasing declining health
- Seniors are able to age in place at home

Dr. Nowaczynski's model of patient centered, supportive, continuous care integrated with medical services is one that needs to be encouraged and lobbied for in Ontario. It would be a worthy topic for a future provincial conference of PAC members and fits nicely with our members' stated number one concern of health care. Dr. Nowaczynski's photo documentary on house calls that he began in 1998 won a Gemini Award and can be obtained from the National Film Board. It aired on Sunday, February 25<sup>th</sup> in competition with the Academy Awards because he was a keynote speaker at the conference.

**PLENARY PRESENTATION: Mandatory Reporting of Abuse of Older Adults – Ageist and ineffective or useful and needed – The Great Debate – Judith Wahl. Executive Director, Advocacy Centre for the Elderly, Toronto, ON**

Judith Wahl conducted an interactive discussion of the pros and cons of legislation that would require the mandatory reporting of suspected or actual incidents of elder abuse.

She spoke strongly in favour of what appears to be common sense but frequently doesn't happen, simply talking to elders about possible abuse issues. Trust is a huge issue with elders so it is important to form relationships. She is not in favour of mandatory reporting except in long term care facilities, because the cons far out weigh the pros. The greatest danger is the risk of retaliation by the perpetrator who may become more abusive and secretive and in the end may not be removed from the situation.

**LUNCH**

**MPP BOB DELANEY, PARLIAMENTARY ASSISTANT TO THE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR SENIORS, BROUGHT GREETINGS ON BEHALF OF MINISTER JIM BRADLEY**

**AFTERNOON PLENARY SESSION ON THE ONPEA TRAINING STRATEGY OF FRONT-LINE STAFF – Deanna Johnson, ONPEA consultant; Darlene Macleod, E-learning Production Coordinator for ONPEA, Toronto, ON; Maureen Etkin, ONPEA, Mississauga, ON**

As part of its Training Strategy for Front-Line Staff, The Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse has taken a performance improvement approach to developing a new comprehensive provincial learning strategy that includes updated core curriculum, job aides, an online learning tool, and Learning Resource Centre. This interactive presentation will provide participants with an introduction to the key components of

ONPEA'S evolution in the field of learning and development, a sampling of its new e-tool, and a practical overview of its training evaluation model.

## **CONCURRENT AFTERNOON SESSIONS ON MONDAY AND TUESDAY**

We chose different sessions so that we could expand our knowledge in this area.

Donna Reid: MP2 – On the Horns of a Dilemma: Abused Older Women at the Intersection of Two systems

MP12 – Elder Abuse: A multifaceted approach to a Multifaceted Problem

TA4 – Consent and Capacity: A Critical Issue in Elder Abuse

Janet Poudrier: MP3 – Connecting the Generations: Celebrating Youth and Elders – An Inter-Generational Paradigm for the Prevention of Elder Abuse

MP8 – Elder Abuse: A Visible Crime

TA1 – Bringing Abuse and Neglect of Seniors in Care Facilities into the Light

TA8 - Implementing the New Standards of Elder Abuse in Long-Term Care Facilities

### **Tuesday, February 27, 2007**

**PLENARY PRESENTATION: Falling Through the Cracks? An Ethical Analysis of Our Response to Elder Abuse – Dr. Diane Godkin, Centre for Clinical Ethics, Toronto, ON; Dr. Kerry Bowman, Joint Centre for Bioethics/Centre for Environment, University of Toronto, ON**

The elderly population in Canada today is older, sicker and more likely to be living alone and in poverty than previous cohorts, factors which may put individuals at greater risk for elder abuse. In this presentation, ethical issues related to elder abuse were explored and gaps in society's ethical and legal response identified.

When or is it ethical to protect a person against their wishes? Western societies believe in autonomy and control of health care but many other cultures view it differently. The cause, labelling and treatment of illness vary a great deal cross culturally.

A growing trend are middle age children moving back home which can be cause for elder abuse by these adult children who are no longer financially independent.

These themes were further explored in other workshops attended. One touched on the abuse of property and personal care by caregivers. There are statutes that are to be followed and people have a legal right to make their own decisions about treatment and nursing home admission. There are rules to be followed in declaring a person incapable of decision-making. That right can only be taken away after a proper evaluation by a trained, authorized professional.

## **AWARDS LUNCHEON**

## **HEALTH ACTION THEATRE FOR SENIORS (HATS)**

## **ABORIGINAL CLOSING AND DRUMMING CEREMONY**

### **Conclusion:**

The whole conference as usual was well organized and very informative. Both Donna and I enjoyed the conference very much and found it be very enlightening. It was great to have two of us there so we could discuss some of the issues.

### **Recommendations:**

**That we continue to send two representatives(s) to this conference**

**That we consider Dr. Mark Nowaczynski as a speaker for a future PAC provincial Conference**

**That we publicize to our districts that June is Elder Abuse Month and June 15 is Elder Abuse Day and request that they carry out activities in support of this issue.**