



OCC July Newsletter

New Method of Circulating Our Newsletter

We have decided to try a new way of attracting members to the OCC website - from now on, we will be notifying all members when the latest newsletter is posted to the website and sending out a link to the website in an email.

This will mean that you will not be opening attachments to your email, including the newsletter, but simply going to the website and finding not only the most recent newsletter but previous editions and lots of other information as well! Sometimes, email *overload* is an issue and you may miss the communication with the newsletter – or fail to open the attachment. We hope this new method works well and will appreciate your feedback letting us know.

It will also be very easy to pass along the link to our website to others who may be interested in OCC activities – and possibly attract new members.

Many thanks to **Nicole Nunes, VHA Home Health Care**, who has so generously been providing support to refresh the OCC website. It is a 'work in progress' and, again, we welcome any feedback to ensure we are keeping our information current and interesting.

Recent OCC Advocacy Efforts

OCC has been pleased to see that the 2017 Ontario Budget, *A Stronger, Healthier Ontario*, provided for a significant investment in respite care in the province as well as recognizing other caregiver needs.

Our Advocacy & Research Committee analyzed the budget recommendations pertaining to caregivers and a letter was sent to Premier Kathleen Wynne acknowledging these positive developments and expressing areas of concern that remain. The critical need for respite to be *flexible* was emphasized as was the need to make the Ontario Caregiver Tax Credit *refundable*.

The Advocacy & Research Committee is currently working on a more detailed submission to send to the Minister of Health and Long Term Care. Several OCC members (for example, **Wesway** in Thunder Bay) have been extremely helpful in providing examples that illustrate the value of, and need for, flexible respite options.

Drug Pricing Policy in Canada – Follow Up

On November 15 and 16, 2016, a 2-day summit was held in Toronto to look at the issue of how patients, patient advocates and caregivers could identify strategies to help shape drug pricing policy in Canada to make the processes “more transparent, accessible and inclusive”. The **Schizophrenia Society of Ontario** (an OCC member) collaborated with the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network and the Save Your Skin Foundation to organize this summit. OCC had additional representation at the event.

Following the summit, several work groups were established and on June 28, 2017, there was a report submitted to Health Canada, endorsed by many patient and caregiver organizations including OCC, *Recommendations on Proposed Amendments to the Patented Medicines Regulations*. You can view this report on the OCC website.

OCC Volunteers Help out at Toronto Seniors’ Forum



Left to right: Joanne Bertrand, OCC Coordinator; Joycelyn Adams and Dawn Vernon, OCC members who volunteered for the day.

On June 15, 2017, the Toronto Seniors’ Forum held its annual event at City Hall and OCC was invited to have a complimentary display table. Many people stopped by to ask about the Coalition and what we do. Most picked up one of our brochures and the basket of mini-Kit Kat bars we had on the display table to encourage visitors emptied within half an hour! Many thanks to Joycelyn and Dawn for volunteering their time and for so warmly interacting with those who stopped by.

Opportunities for Caregiver Education

Many organizations that are OCC members are going to be busy throughout the summer offering educational opportunities for caregivers. **CMHA Ontario** and the **ENRICHES Collaborative** are

offering a free eight-week program for caregivers in the Toronto area who are 55+. The program is called **Living Life to the Full**. For more information, contact Jenny Hardy, Program Manager at: jhardy@ontario.cmha.ca or 416-977-5580 ext. 4135.

Stephanie Conant, **North York Community House**, forwarded a flyer (see below) that may be of interest to caregivers 55+ who want to learn more about computers from a youth tutor.



Free Computer program - caregivers!

Are you **55 years or older** and a **caregiver**?

(caring for a family member or friend informally)

Interested in learning

computer skills with a youth tutor?

Mondays from July 10—August 28, 2017
ESS Support Services (1447 Royal York Rd., Etobicoke)

4:00—5:30 p.m.

To Register, contact: Shova

sadhikari@nych.ca 647-208-9733

www.nych.ca/senior-caregivers

This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program.

Canada

Finally, Patricia Wendy, **Circle of Care**, would like everyone to know about 10-week accredited program (August 1 thru October 3, 2017) for those caring for spouses with dementia. This program is part of the **Sinai Health System Reitman Centre CARERS Program**. It is free of

charge and transportation and respite care may be available. For more information or to register, call 416-635-2900 ext. 499.

Welcome to New OCC Members

We are very pleased to welcome the following who have joined OCC since our last newsletter:

Joseph Donia, **Huddle Innovation**, Toronto

Sandra Godoy, **Parkdale Community Health Centre**, Toronto

Judy Berger, Caregiver, Toronto

Next OCC General Members' Meeting in September

The OCC Steering Committee will be meeting in July and in August to discuss and plan a special meeting for the general membership in September where we hope to get consensus from all members on a *strategic reset* for the Coalition.

This is an exciting time and public awareness and recognition of the importance and value of caregivers is growing. We are proud of what OCC has been able to accomplish in less than a decade in influencing policy that affects caregivers. However, our resources are limited and strained. We need to be creative, realistic and targeted in our activities to maximize our impact going forward – and that means we need to engage and involve all OCC members.

A date, time and location for the September meeting will go out in early August.

Disclaimer: *This newsletter is for information purposes only.*