

***Citizen Watch Continuing Care in Alberta  
and the Seniors' Action and Liaison Team***  
[www.continuingcarewatch.com](http://www.continuingcarewatch.com)

**May 21, 2008**

**Subject: Launch of new Monthly Information Bulletin for MLAs**

**Memo to Alberta MLAs from Citizen Watch and the Seniors' Action and Liaison Team**

There are many issues of concern to citizens and their elected representatives. Both are challenged with competing demands for their attention, and for the time to understand increasingly complex issues. Seniors' wellbeing and care is both a complex issue and a concern for not only seniors, but also for their adult working children and grandchildren, employers and society at large.

**Citizen Watch on Continuing Care** has been monitoring these concerns for a number of years and has maintained a website [www.continuingcarewatch.com](http://www.continuingcarewatch.com) to provide information about the continuing care system and some of the difficult situations that many families face.

**SALT**, a non-partisan group of seniors concerned with social justice issues, has recently published a Brief on Continuing Care Issues, and met with the Premier and the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports.

**SALT and Citizen Watch are teaming to publish a monthly Bulletin**, with information about a current topic of concern, to contribute to a better-informed public discussion of family and societal needs related to continuing care services.

**It will be sent to each MLA and posted on the Citizen Watch website.** We hope it will provide some common ground for discussion. The first issue of our bulletin is attached to this email, and can be viewed at <http://www.continuingcarewatch.com> .

We look forward to your questions and views. If you'd like to provide a response for posting on the website in the MLA Bulletin section, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Carol Wodak, on behalf of the Seniors' Action and Liaison Team, and Citizen Watch

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## **MLA Bulletin 1: Groups meet with Premier and Seniors' Minister**

May 19, 2008

There are many issues of concern to citizens and their elected representatives. Both are challenged with competing demands for their attention, and for the time to understand increasingly complex issues.

Seniors' wellbeing and care is both a complex issue and a concern for not only seniors, but also for their adult working children and grandchildren, employers and society at large. Many seniors enjoy good health and an income adequate to live independent and quality lives. But many don't, and in addition to basic income, housing, cost of living and transportation supports, some need quality long-term health services and care settings to manage complex care needs.

Two citizen groups, the Seniors' Action and Liaison Team (SALT) and Citizen Watch, have been paying attention to these concerns for a number of years.

Citizen Watch has maintained a website to provide information about the continuing care system and difficult complex care issues some seniors face, at [www.continuingcarewatch.com](http://www.continuingcarewatch.com).

SALT, a non-partisan group of seniors concerned with social justice issues, has recently met with the Premier and the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports to describe some of the underlying issues which we believe have not been addressed, and to attempt to find common ground for resolving the unfortunate reality that many seniors and their families experience.

To further this process, and to contribute to a better-informed public discussion of our continuing care services, SALT and Citizen Watch will be sending a monthly Bulletin, with information about a topic of concern, to each MLA. The Bulletins will be posted on the Citizen Watch website, and we hope they will provide some common ground for public discussion.

There have been white papers and policy reports on "the aging population" since 1982; there were major social and health care policy reforms in 1988 and in 1999. In 2003, the Health Quality Council's survey of satisfaction with health care services reported very low ratings for access to home care and especially to long-term care<sup>1</sup>, prompting the Council to undertake a detailed survey which will be reported soon. The 2005 Auditor General and MLA Task Force reports gave legitimacy to concerns about continuing care, and renewed initiatives to address some of the issues. Despite these efforts, the same concerns about access to services, appropriate services, and quality of care, persist.

The theme of our submissions to the Premier and the Minister of Seniors was the need for more and better information about care needs, care services, and service outcomes; more involvement of seniors, their families and the public before decisions are formed; and transparency and accountability for issues of access and quality of care services. We invite you to read the submissions and the reports on which they were based; [Advocates Propose Solutions to Crisis in Seniors Care](http://www.continuingcarewatch.com/homepage.php) is available at <http://www.continuingcarewatch.com/homepage.php>.

We hope you'll find these Bulletins useful, and we'd be happy to hear your questions and views.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Carol Wodak, on behalf of the Seniors' Action and Liaison Team, and Citizen Watch  
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<sup>1</sup> [Satisfaction with Health Care Services, A Survey of Albertans 2003](http://www.hqca.ca/index.php?id=87), pages 206 – 216  
<http://www.hqca.ca/index.php?id=87> download *Health Services Satisfaction Survey 2003*, HSUOC Technical