

Ontario Provincial Council
Of The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Education and Health Standing Committee

Directive #12

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To: Diocesan Education and Health Committee Chairpersons
From: Wilma Vanderzwaag, Ontario Provincial Council, Sub Committee Chairs:
Mary Lou Watson and Heather Sisk
cc: Diocesan Presidents, Archbishop O'Brien, Ontario Provincial Council Executive,
National Health and Education Standing Committee Chairperson

The Lord gives many blessings to all who trust in Him.
Romans 10:12

Advent greetings to you all. I know that many are not having meetings in December however, I am sending this directive now, so that in the new year you will have information for upcoming meetings. In November, I was able to attend the Centre for Clinical Ethics Annual Conference, held at the Li Ka Shing Knowledge Centre in Toronto. This year the topic was, **Putting Care into Mental Health Care**. It was wonderful to see National Past President Margaret Anne Jacobs and National Education and Health Chair, Faith Anderson there. I will be sending in the new year a separate report on this conference.

The National Bursary fund has made changes effective in 2019. United States courses may be pursued if the program is not available in Canada. This may give more members the opportunity to apply for the national bursary.

Plastic waste continues to be a major environmental concern. At the 2018 G7 Summit, the *Oceans Plastic Charter* was signed by leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the European Union. These countries are committed to a more sustainable and resource efficient approach to the management of plastics. Visit g7.gc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/OceanPlasticsCharter.pdf for more on this important issue. Each of us can do a small part—bring your own reusable water bottle and bring your own shopping bags to name two easy things we can all do.

The Advent and Christmas Season are busy times, seeing many family and friends as well as being out in public more often. Make sure you get your flu shot to help you through the tough winter months and to especially help the ones that their health situation makes them at greater risk of more problematic reactions.

Senator Yvonne Boyer is asking for a study on Indigenous women that have been coerced into sterilization. New research shows the forced sterilization of Indigenous women is still happening based on reports from Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario and the territories. Tubal ligations have been carried out on unwilling Indigenous women. There is a class action lawsuit against the Saskatoon Health Region on behalf of two women affected by this. Since the lawsuit was launched in 2017 about 60 more women have joined the claim. The law firm representing these women raised the issue of

coerced sterilizations of Indigenous women at the UN Committee Against Torture in November. In the submission to the committee, the firm calls out the provincial and federal authorities for not investigating and punishing those responsible for the practice despite having received “numerous reports of numerous cases of forced sterilization.” It also outlines specific steps to combat the practice, including criminalizing forced sterilization through the Criminal Code and having Health Canada issue guidance to health professionals. Amnesty International Canada also plans to raise awareness at the UN. They are also calling on the federal government to appoint a special representative to hear from Indigenous women who have had forced sterilization procedures. Indigenous Services Minister, Jane Philpott stated that “Canada must ensure the practice stops with policies, education and awareness-raising. Let’s do our part by helping to bring awareness to our members and asking our representatives of government both provincial and federal that measures and action must be done to stop this practice. Life from conception to natural death is for everyone.

Did you know that the League is a supporter of the Canadian Blood Services Partners for Life program? New and regular blood donors are asked to consider registering for the program under the League’s partner identification number (CATH011269). Visit www.blood.ca/joinpartnersforlife for more information.

211.ca—is a website that provides information to community, social, non-clinical health and related government services, 24 hours a day in over 100 languages. 211 connects people to the right information and services—share this information.

With regards to our Provincial theme on persons without a home, the federal government is working on a homelessness strategy, named “Reaching Home”. Details of the “Reaching Home” plan are being laid out as the Liberals prepare to introduce legislation to put into law a strategy to lift more than two million people out of poverty. New funding will be available in the new year for housing programs from construction to rent subsidies. Municipal governments need funding from the federal and provincial governments in order to implement programs or build. Let’s watch to see what happens with this strategy.

Many Diocesan Education and Health Chairs are creating their own directives for their parish council counterparts. These directives are well thought out, informative and excellent! I look forward to receiving them and reading what issues are being reported on. Thank you to all the Diocesan Counterparts who send me information that they feel needs to go out to everyone in our province—things happen when we educate our members!

My hope for each of you is that you enjoy the hopeful anticipation of Advent and experience joy in the Christmas Season. May our Lord continue to bless each of you in the New Year,

Wilma

