

Message to Presidents – BCAHA Member Auxiliaries

In response to the motion on PST exemptions for member thrift shops, we advise a draft letter to both the Health and Finance Ministries is currently in development. We hope to have this finalized and sent to the ministers in time for receipt and discussion in the fall session of parliament.

We do, however, wish to inform all members of the need for this method of representation to the Provincial government. Ongoing research has revealed a definition by Canada Revenue Agency regarding charities' political activities i.e. "lobbying" government,

•An activity is presumed to be political if a charity:

- explicitly communicates a call to political action (that is, encourages the public to contact an elected representative or public official and urges them to retain, oppose, or change the law, policy, or decision of any level of government in Canada or a foreign country);
- explicitly indicates in its materials (whether internal or external) that the intention of the activity is to incite, or organize to put pressure on, an elected representative or public official to retain, oppose, or change the law, policy or decision on any level of government in Canada or a foreign country.

Evidence of a charity engaging in prohibited political activities, can result in the loss of the charitable status of the organization.

However, if a registered charity makes a representation, whether by invitation or not, to an elected representative or public official, the activity is considered to be charitable. Even if the charity explicitly advocates that the law, policy, or decision of any level of government in Canada ought to be retained, opposed, or changed the activity is considered to fall within the general scope of charitable activities. However, such activity should be subordinate to the charity's purpose and all representations should:

- relate to an issue that is connected to the charity's purpose
- be well-reasoned
- not contain information that the charity knows or ought to know is false, incorrect, or misleading.

This information is available on CRA's website: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-giving/chrts/plcy/cps/cps-022

We have also researched BCHA's minute books for the last two decades and find numerous mentions of previous petitions (5-6) to the provincial government on this issue. To date, there have been no exemptions granted with regard to PST over and above those exemptions already stated in the existing guidelines; however our petition on taxation refunds for hospital equipment was granted.

We will continue to keep you updated on our progress with the petition on PST exemptions, by correspondence and on the website.

Valerie Tribes

President, British Columbia Association of Healthcare Auxiliaries