

Services to the elderly

Seniors:

Along with other major advanced economies, Canada's population will age in the years to come. By 2030, Statistics Canada points out that almost a quarter of the population will be over age 65, compared with 15.3% in 2013.¹ Throughout the decades to come what might be termed "older seniors", the population of those aged 80 and above, will explode to reach nearly 5 million by 2063, compared to only 1.4 million in 2013.²

As the population ages, the profile of senior is likely to alter: today's and future seniors are likely to want to remain in their own home as long as possible, and they also are likely to have had fewer children than previous generations of seniors. Fewer children may also be less able to care for aging parents than previous generations were due to a variety of changing conditions.

This rapid aging will likely place public and private seniors residences and long term care under exacerbated strain.

In support of efforts to help seniors stay in their own homes longer, CUPW believes that Canada Post can leverage its expansive, personal network of about 26,500 letter carriers and RSMCs to provide services to seniors.

Currently, letter carriers keep an eye on the vulnerable through leveraging their knowledge of their customer base. In most cases, it is informal: carriers tend to know who their customers are. Knowing that someone is alone, they will, for instance, knock on someone's front door if the mail hasn't been picked up for a number of days.

But in at least one community, through a partnership with community organizations, the Letter Carrier Alert program is still functional. Started in the 1980s by the (now merged into CUPW) Letter Carriers Union of Canada (LCUC) in collaboration with the Canadian Labour Congress and the United Way of Canada, the aim of the program was to identify seniors or others in need of assistance in the home.³

In the United States, the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC, the union representing letter carriers) and the United States Postal Service (USPS) cooperate on the Carrier Alert

¹ "Population projections: Canada, the provinces and territories, 2013 to 2063" Statistics Canada. url: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140917/dq140917a-eng.htm> . Last accessed: June 7th 2016.

² Ibid.

³ See appendix A for example of internal LCUC communication from 1982 explaining Letter Carrier Alert.

program. The letter carrier keeps an eye for issues with pre-registered customers, and if she notices something, reports this to a local community sponsoring organization.

Some post offices are taking this role a few steps further. Many countries (see appendix B for a list of countries and initiatives which CUPW has located) have begun to implement various forms of senior check-in visits. Though all unique in service details, these initiatives tend to go further than merely “keeping an eye” out for warning signs on the route, and engage in the active contacting of the individuals in order to verify the individual’s well-being. Broadly, these various initiatives appear to share three aims:

1. They support aging populations to remain in their home through basic contact with the letter carrier and are designed as a detection tool to identify if problems are emerging;
2. They allow for the optimization of social services – by having letter carriers play a supporting or “first step” type role for service providers who are the ones providing specialised services;
3. They create a new revenue stream for postal operators at a time of falling letter mail volumes;

Particularly noteworthy is the *Cohesio* service offered by La Poste. This service makes use of the versatile smart phone which every French letter carrier now carries. Once someone is signed up for a check-in service, the letter carrier (during their daily round) uses the smartphone to pass through, with the individual concerned, a series of “yes/no” self-assessment type questions on the person’s state. The letter carrier inputs the results, which are then sent to the ordering party through the internet when the carrier returns to their depot. Questions are established by the ordering party, with the letter carrier simply serving as the intermediary between two individuals. They are not responsible for health care provision or conducting any sort of needs assessment – however, they do have an emergency contact listed in their smartphone for each recipient.

La Poste offers this contract through partnerships with pension authorities, and can modify this contract to other entities requiring individualised visits to the public.

CUPW understands that the Belgian Post (BPost) has a similar initiative underway in various municipalities in the Flemish Region, known as *bclose*. First launched in Ostend, the municipality and post partnered to administer a survey to elderly residents in order to gauge their well-being and need (as applicable) for follow-ups from relevant social services.

Canada Post could develop such a service, which would enable social service providers to order a weekly or even daily contact with those needing check-ins. Another potential option for the service would be an “individualised” system, where, for example, children who normally visit their elderly parents but are unable to could have the letter carrier check in.

Canada Post is ideally suited to provide such a service as recent research has found that letter carriers are one of the most trusted professions in the country⁴.

The Post also has a unique strength to leverage as it is already the trusted, neutral intermediary between two parties conducting a digital transaction. In the same way that Canada Post is the physical link for delivering digitally ordered parcels, we can also be the physical link in the provision of (increasingly) digital social services.

Canada Post’s third advantage in providing such services is that it already bundles numerous disparate items and sequences them into a line of delivery and collection. The visit of a senior would be just one more door in a line which includes parcels, mail items and other new services discussed in this submission. CPC’s expertise in bundling is a key strength because a senior needing a check-in is also very likely to require other home services. The letter carrier could also, while checking on a senior, deliver specialised telemedicine items, groceries, medication as well as parcels and mail.

Post Nord (Denmark) is pursuing telemedicine services, with a view to the letter carrier bundling multiple social services into one visit.

A new source of revenue for posts:

While the social advantage of such services is clear, it should also be noted that other posts see the potential of such services to generate new lines of revenue in a context of falling letter volumes.

La Poste earned approximately €19 million in revenue from a plethora of new services, including *cohesio*, in fiscal 2015, and estimated that it would conduct between 5 and 7 million new service visits. It expects to raise this total revenue to €200 million of annual revenue by 2020.

A 2015 paper by the USPS Office of the Inspector General (OIG) found that the USPS could earn \$123 million in revenue and \$27 million in profits from various seniors’ services.⁵

⁴ 87% of Canadians, a 2015 Léger survey found, trust letter carriers. They score better than professions such as airline pilots, dentists or even social workers. See: ‘Baromètre des professions 2015’, *Les Affaires*. Last Accessed: May 30th 2015. url: http://leger360.com/admin/upload/publi_pdf/sofr20150330.pdf

For example, the paper notes that Japan Post has a service called “Watch Over” that checks on seniors and reports back to family members for a small monthly fee. This service costs the equivalent of about \$8.40 US per month. According to the OIG, a similar service in the US would generate \$12.6 million in revenues annually if just one per cent of its 12.5 million older adults that live alone signed up.

While the figures in the above represent a small percentage in total revenues of either post office, they nonetheless are figures which are financially material.

Recommendation: That Canada Post identify a community, extensively consult with seniors, health and social services providers to design and test new services to be offered by letter carriers, with a specific focus on check-in services for seniors and the disabled.

Recommendation: That Canada Post, at a national and community level, conduct ongoing joint research with CUPW into the effects of an aging society and what other opportunities for new lines of business this could represent.

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⁵ See: Office of the Inspector General, United States Postal Service. “The Postal Service’s role in delivering wellness services and supplies”. 2015. url: https://www.uspsoig.gov/sites/default/files/document-library-files/2015/rarc-ib-15-004_the_postal_services_role_in_delivering_wellness_services_and_supplies_0.pdf. Last accessed: May 25th 2016.

Appendix A

LETTER CARRIERS' ALERT PROGRAM



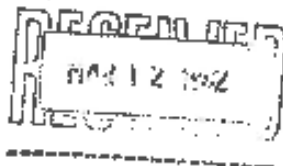
UNITED WAY



LETTER CARRIERS
UNION OF CANADA



CANADIAN
LABOUR CONGRESS



BULLETIN NO. 82-13
March 5, 1982

TO ALL BUSINESS AGENTS, ALTERNATES, LOCAL PRESIDENTS AND SECRETARIES, SHOP STEWARDS AND THE ASSISTANTS TO THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE.

LETTER CARRIERS' ALERT PROGRAM

Many of our locals have launched their own Letter Carriers' Alert Program and have become very active in helping the elderly, disabled and handicapped. Some of these locals are as follows:

District 1

St. John's, Newfoundland
Corner Brook, Newfoundland
Saint John, New Brunswick
St. Stephen, New Brunswick
Bathurst, New Brunswick
Fredericton, New Brunswick
Moncton, New Brunswick
Halifax, Nova Scotia
Sydney, Nova Scotia
Amherst, Nova Scotia
Charlottetown, P.E.I.

District 2

Locals have requested information but so far no programs have been initiated.

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A UNITED WAY/CLG LABOUR PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

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District 3

Pointe Gatineau, Quebec

District 5

Toronto, Ontario
Scarborough, Ontario
Etobicoke, Ontario
Islington, Ontario
Weston, Ontario
Oakawa, Ontario

District 7

Winnipeg, Manitoba

District 9

Vancouver, B.C.

District 4

Ottawa, Ontario
Kingston, Ontario

District 6

London, Ontario
Windsor, Ontario
St. Catharines, Ontario
Thorold, Ontario
Strathroy, Ontario

District 8

Calgary, Alberta
Lethbridge, Alberta
Red Deer, Alberta

District 10

Victoria, B.C.
Nanaimo, B.C.
Campbell River, B.C.

District 11

Farnham, Quebec
St. Georges, Quebec
Flessisville, Quebec

National Office has received many requests from locals for information and literature concerning this very vital program and many of these locals have reported to National Office that their program was in the planning stage. However, until we have been notified that the program is functional in the local, we cannot include the local in our lists.

The Letter Carriers' Alert Program is highly regarded by the public as an essential program, an assistance program where only the letter carrier can perform the service to the elderly, disabled and handicapped as he/she is the only person who consistently stops at the home five days a week.

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This program reflects the Union membership's interest and concern for the elderly, disabled and handicapped and has the support of many citizens, politicians and community groups who are presently making representations to secure letter carrier service in new areas.

All locals are urged to initiate their own Letter Carriers' Alert Program immediately and publicize the fact that they are planning on providing this service. The introduction of such a program will benefit those who are providing the service, in addition to those who will receive the service. Such a service will also give added protection to the five day door-to-door delivery service as this is a service that no private courier company could or would ever provide.

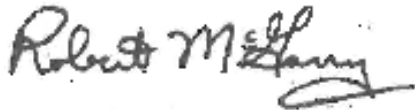
The letter carriers have provided this very same service on a more personalized, individual basis for years. However, with the establishment of an organized program, the members and the Union will benefit by the good public image created and society will benefit from the badly needed service at a time when those who cannot keep up with the fast pace of living, i.e. the elderly, disabled and handicapped, are left behind because of the cost-cutting attitude of the municipal and provincial governments.

The United Way has many agencies assisting the elderly, disabled and handicapped and working with the Letter Carriers' Union of Canada as the reporting agencies.

If your local has already initiated its own Letter Carriers' Alert Program, we would appreciate your cooperation in notifying us and your Business Agent. If your local would like to launch its own program and need information or instructions, please do not hesitate to contact National Office or your Business Agent.

Only a local can initiate its own Letter Carriers' Alert Program and only our members can perpetuate the service because they are there and they care.

Yours fraternally,



Robert McGarry,
National President.

RMCG/cl

WHAT IS IT?

The Letter Carriers' Alert Program is a free program designed to help seniors and disabled people. The letter carrier keeps a watchful eye for signs indicating that a patron may be in need of assistance — e.g. mail or newspapers not taken out of the mail box, or any unusual appearance in or around their residence. Once alerted, the letter carrier will contact the reporting agency which will take steps to check the patron's situation and arrange assistance if needed.

WHO TAKES PART?

The Letter Carriers' Union of Canada, the United Way and the Canadian Labour Congress are the three organizations working together to assist the seniors and disabled members of communities across Canada. While not all areas have the benefit of this program as yet, many locals are working to launch their own program and become involved in this worthy project. Further information concerning any particular community and its participation in the program can be obtained from the local letter carrier or the local branch of the United Way.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

All senior citizens and handicapped persons living in a community which is participating in the program are eligible for this free service. The seniors and handicapped persons need only ask their local letter carrier for a registration card to participate in the program.

Appendix B

Seniors Services, examples from other countries

Postal operators are experimenting, or have implemented, letter carrier visit programs targeting vulnerable populations. Here is some basic information and links to initiatives worldwide:

Postal operator (country)	Name of initiative	Description	Link to further information
La Poste (France)	Cohesio	Visits by the letter carrier to vulnerable senior populations. This service is paid for by insurance regimes. CUPW understands that this year, the service will be expanded to also provide for an “individual option” – allowing individuals to purchase customised visits.	http://www.laposte.fr/entreprise/produits-et-services/cohesio
BPost (Belgium)	Bclose	Letter carriers conduct contact visits with the fragile. This was begun through a survey into the needs of seniors in Ostende. Now has been expanded to 10 new municipalities in 2015. CUPW understands that currently this service is currently limited to the Flemish region.	BPost annual report 2015, p. 117. http://corporate.bpost.be/~media/Files/B/Bpost/annual-reports/bpost%20financial%20report%202015.pdf
Japan Post	Watch over	Provides visits by letter carrier to the elderly. Costs approximately \$8.40 CDN per month. Appears to be popular in rural areas. It is difficult to find non-Japanese language information online.	P. 3, 2015 annual report. https://www.japanpost.jp/en/ir/library/disclosure/2015/pdf/all.pdf http://arstechnica.com/apple/2015/04/apple-and-ibm-will-give-4-to-5-million-ipads-to-japanese-seniors/
Yamato Parcel (Japanese private parcel delivery)	Project G: Has created locally tailored programs such as “Watch Over Support”,	Yamato offers a service to deliver a monthly newsletter by a municipality (Fukaura Town) to the elderly. During the delivery, the parcel company checks in on the elderly recipients. If elderly are not home for an extended period, the municipality assigns a social worker to do follow up. In another town, it conducts shopping on behalf of the elderly, but	Yamato Group corporate social responsibility report, 2015. P.11-14. http://yamato-hd.co.jp/english/csr/report/pdf/YAMATO-HD_CSR2015E_All.pdf

	"Shopping support"	also does a "check-in" with the elderly person upon delivery of items.	
Deutsche Post (Germany)	Post Persönlich	A pilot in two cities in the Ruhr (Mülheim and Gelsenkirchen). Costs approximately 40 Euros per month, with the letter carrier visiting between Tuesday and Saturday.	Postal Technology, June 2015. P. 38. German language news coverage: http://www.stern.de/wirtschaft/news/neuer-service--post-persoendlich--der-brieftraeger-soll-sich-um-die-oma-kuemmern-3164762.html . http://www.swr.de/swrinfo/post-persoendlich-brieftraeger-sehen-nach-senioren/-/id=7612/did=13641278/nid=7612/735elb/index.html
PostNord (Denmark)	Various welfare provision services	PostNord (in Denmark) sees itself as a dynamic bundler of emerging welfare services to better support an ageing society. Examples include grocery deliveries, laundry services and telemedicine services.	See, "PostNord Annual and Sustainability Report 2015". http://www.postnord.com/globalassets/global/english/document/reports/annual-reports/2015/pos_ar15_eng_web.pdf
United States USPS	Carrier Alert	Voluntary participation, dependent on a local sponsoring community organization, such as the United Way or the Red cross.	https://www.nalc.org/community-service/carrier-alert