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HOUSE OF COMMONS
CANADA

Maurice Vellacott, MP
Saskatoon-Wanuskewin

The Government of Canada supports seniors

For Immediate Release

July 6, 2011

SASKATOON – Maurice Vellacott, Member of Parliament for Saskatoon-Wanuskewin highlighted today that more than 680,000 of Canada’s lowest-income seniors, will soon benefit from the most significant increase to the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) in a quarter century.

“Canada’s seniors have worked hard to build a better nation for the generations to follow, and our Conservative Government has taken significant steps to improve their quality of life,” said Vellacott. “In Budget 2011, the Next Phase of Canada’s Economic Action Plan, we have increased financial support for low-income seniors and enhanced the New Horizons for Seniors Program (NHSP).”

As of July of this year, seniors with little or no income other than the Old Age Security (OAS) benefit and the GIS now receive additional benefits up to \$600 per year for single seniors and up to \$840 per year for couples.

The increase to the GIS represents a \$300 million investment per year and is the third GIS increase in the last five years. OAS benefits, including the GIS, help seniors meet their immediate, basic needs and maintain a minimum standard of living in retirement.

MP Vellacott also highlighted that Budget 2011 is providing an additional \$10 million over two years for the NHSP. The NHSP helps seniors use their leadership, energy and skills to benefit communities across Canada. A call for proposals for this program is now open. Please visit www.hrsdc.gc.ca/seniors for details.

Since 2006, the Government of Canada has taken action on many issues important to seniors including:

- providing Canadians with close to \$72 billion this year through Canada’s public pension system;
- providing \$2.3 billion annually in additional tax relief to seniors and pensioners through measures such as pension income splitting and increasing the Age Credit;
- providing \$400 million over two years under Budget 2009 for the construction of housing units for low-income seniors;
- supporting positive and active aging through the collaborative Age Friendly Communities Initiative, Physical Activity Tips for Older Adults, and falls prevention initiatives;

- appointing a Minister of State (Seniors)—someone who can bring the concerns of older Canadians to the Cabinet table and stand up on their behalf;
- establishing October 1st as National Seniors Day to recognize the significant and ongoing contributions seniors make to families, communities, workplaces and society;
- creating the National Seniors Council in 2007 to provide advice to the federal government on matters related to the well-being and quality of life of seniors; and
- investing \$13 million over three years in support of the Federal Elder Abuse Initiative (FEAI), which successfully concluded on March 31, 2011. Building on the momentum created through the FEAI, which featured an awareness campaign, the Government of Canada remains active in addressing elder abuse through the New Horizons for Seniors Program.

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For further comment, call (613) 992-1966 or (613) 297-2249