



## **Cortland residents relish chance to chat with Sen. Manchin**

Stanley “Champ” Sedmock, a 13-year resident of Cortland Acres, may not have to wait long for U.S. Sen. Joe Manchin to take him up on his offer of a cup of coffee.

“Hopefully I can stop by soon and visit with you in person,” Manchin said via the online teleconference program Skype. “I’d love to be with you this morning. But since I’m not, this is the best way for me to talk with you about your concerns.”

Manchin, who owns a home and loves spending time in Canaan Valley, spoke with more than a dozen Cortland Acres residents last week via Skype in recognition of National Nursing Home Week.

“It is terrific that we have this opportunity to talk with you, Sen. Manchin, about issues important to our residents,” Administrator Don Black said. “We are especially grateful because this month is Cortland Acres 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. It was 35 years ago this month that a group of folks put together a nursing home and Cortland opened its doors.”

Manchin has been “Skyping” with high school students throughout West Virginia for the past couple of months. Last week he accepted a special invitation, and the only one of its kind, from Cortland Acres. During the 20-minute session he answered a variety of questions ranging from stem cell and emphysema research to the importance of children and exercise.

But it was the question from resident Francis Bibeau that drew the most attention.

“I want to know if you are going to run for president someday,” she asked.

“I don’t think so Francis,” Manchin replied with a smile. “I enjoy public service so much. I never thought I’d be this old and be this homesick for my state of West Virginia.

“I don’t get to come home as much as I want to. I want to serve the people of West Virginia to the best of my ability. You never say never, but that’s not on my radar screen right now.”

Betty Bonner asked about the different amounts of spending money per month received by Medicaid and Social Security recipients and Veterans.

“Nursing home residents on Medicaid receive \$50 spending money per month, residents on SSI only receive \$30 spending money per month and those who are veterans get \$90 per month,” she said. “Would it be possible for those getting only \$30 a month to be increased to \$50 or could everyone get \$90?”

Manchin said he would look into the different spending levels for each program.

“I will check into the reasons for the differences of \$30, \$50 and \$90,” he said. “If there’s any adjustment that is recommended or if we can these make adjustments for you, we will. You are asking for a fairness situation.”

Next resident Leona Howell asked about “any research projects regarding breathing problems like emphysema.”

Manchin knows emphysema is a major health challenge in West Virginia because of the types of jobs available.

“Emphysema takes a terrible toll on West Virginians as we know,” he said, noting that he has family members who suffer from the disease. “I don’t know of any or additional research being done or any break through that has happened, but I will find out more information for you. I know we are committed and doing everything humanly possible.”

Sedmock, who has Multiple Sclerosis, asked Manchin about stem cell research.

“Will I see the use of stem cell research on MS in the near future?” he asked. “If not, are there new treatments available for my type of MS, not a cure but a treatment to make life a little more tolerable?”

Manchin said he's proud to support funding for the National Institute of Health, the entity responsible for these types of stem cell research projects.

"I've always said you should set your priorities based on our values as Americans and try to find cures that get people a better quality of life," he said. "The NIH is doing everything humanly possible that I know of for stem cell research. As you know it is a very tedious and long process. We have to continue to be hopeful and not to give up for finding the cure that can improve the quality for people like yourself."

Next Clara Mae Davis posed a question concerning children and the amount of time devoted to recess and exercise.

"Is there any effort to provide more play or exercise time for children in schools today instead of sitting in front of a TV or computer?" she asked.

Manchin said this issue has been a concern of his since he was governor of West Virginia. He said this issue starts at home with parents and the community getting youth involved and creating healthier lifestyles.

"When I went to school everyone had to take recess or phys ed," he said. "My understanding now is it is not even mandatory. So kids go to school and never have a phys ed class."

Beth Clevenger, assistant administrator at Cortland Acres, worked closely with Peggy Hawse, regional coordinator for Manchin, to schedule the special event.

"Sen. Manchin was excited about this opportunity to talk with Cortland Acres residents about their concerns and to celebrate National Nursing Home Week," Hawse said.

Cortland Acres includes a 94-bed long-term care facility, in- and outpatient physical therapy and rehabilitation, Pineview Apartments and The Pines duplexes. For more information call 304-463-4181 or visit [www.cortlandacres.org](http://www.cortlandacres.org).