

**BC 04
Branch Update (#3)
March 2021**



National Association
of Federal Retirees Association nationale
des retraités fédéraux

FRASER VALLEY WEST



Hello, fellow BC 04 Branch members.

FEDERAL RETIREES takes concerns about long-term care and Veterans' backlog to local MPs

Branch volunteers continue to meet with local Members of Parliament to reiterate FEDERAL RETIREES' "4 priorities" and to underline the Association's call for urgent improvements in long-term care. On Monday, January 30th, we met with Liberal MPs Ken Hardie (Fleetwood-Port Kells) and Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre), and on February 11th, we met with Conservative MP Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows).

FEDERAL RETIREES' is calling on all levels of government to collaborate on a national review of long-term care, with a view to ensuring appropriate levels of funding; tying funding to national criteria and care standards; developing a national workforce planning strategy; and recognizing and supporting the contribution of informal caregivers. Such a review must be public, independent, evidence-based and informed by older adults, informal caregivers and subject-matter experts. The Association also recognizes that providing more and better home care could reduce the need for, and cost of long term care and offer greater quality of life to many of our frail elders. FEDERAL RETIREES advocates for the development of a national Seniors Strategy to bring together all the elements that promote health (income security, health care, shelter, transportation, etc.) to enable elder Canadians to age in place and to continue to contribute to their communities as long as possible.

In our meetings with the MPs, we noted that the Prime Minister, in a supplementary mandate letter, has directed the Minister of Seniors, the Hon. Deb Schulte, "to work with the Minister of Health to take additional action to help seniors age in place and stay in their homes longer"; to set "new, national standards for long-term care", and to "accelerate steps to achieve a national, universal pharmacare program".

The Liberal MPs suggested we should expect to see funding allocated toward achieving each of those objectives in the upcoming federal budget. They also indicated that the pharmacare program under consideration is of the "public, single-payer" variety, rather than one that fills in the gaps

NOTICE:

BRANCH ANNUAL MEETING

The Branch Annual Meeting will be held via Zoom on March 24, 2021 at 11 a.m.

To register and receive an invitation and the info package for this meeting, please email Ian at president@nafrfraservalleywest.ca

Notice of this meeting was first issued by email on February 1st, 2021. The required quorum is 19.

Please note this meeting will include consideration of the Branch reserve funds.

Please plan to attend and please consider stepping forward to serve as a member of the board.

To place a name in nomination, contact Bernd Hirsekorn, who is serving as Chair of the Nominations Committee, at bh45jh@shaw.ca

between a myriad of private insurance plans. Mr. Hardie suggested we plan to meet again after the budget to review how well our priorities are reflected in that document.

For his part, Mr. Dalton listened attentively to our concerns and agreed that a collaborative approach is needed to ensure that high quality care is available to elder Canadians no matter where they reside. On questions of funding, he expressed frustration that the government has not submitted a budget for parliamentary scrutiny in nearly two years of record spending.

All MPs expressed concern when we raised the issue of the continuing backlog at Veteran's Affairs in processing claims from injured veterans. We referred them to the presentation made by former FEDERAL RETIREES' CEO Simon Coakeley to the House of Commons Veterans Affairs Committee on November 12th, where he cited stats that indicate VAC consistently fails to meet its own service standards and that point to a systemic bias that underserves female and francophone applicants. (A video of the presentation is available on the national web-site.)

Good meetings! Good discussion! Care to join us?. Contact Ian.

Virtual 'Meet and Chat':

Scams and Frauds



We had a good turnout for the February 18th Zoom presentation by Edna Park, a volunteer with COSCO's Health and Wellness Institute. Edna led us through a lively discussion of various scams aimed at lightening the wallets and purses of seniors.

Beware of the **"grandparent/emergency"** scam: The caller poses as 'your favourite grandchild' and says he/she is stranded somewhere or in custody and in need of bail ('Send money quick! Please don't tell Mom!'). Then there is the always popular **"extortion scam"**: the aggressive caller says that you owe money to CRA but a quick wire transfer will get you out of trouble.

"Phishing": Probably by now everyone has received an email, purportedly from your bank or phone company or another service provider, advising you of a glitch with your account. Check the email address of the sender; you will probably see irregularities. "Delete"! Or, if in doubt, always double-check by calling the service provider yourself (not by replying to the email) to verify the source.

The **"romance scam"**: You meet someone on line. He/she *really*, *really* likes you. *Really*. *Can't wait* to meet you, but may need help with the airfare. (Or, since hardly anyone is travelling these days, it is more likely that you will learn that your love interest is distracted by a tragedy in the family: a relative needs an urgent surgery they can't afford... *Can you help?*)

The **"overpayment scam"**: You sell something on line. The buyer sends you a cheque for an amount much larger than the sale price. When you contact the buyer, he/she apologises for the error and suggests you wire them the difference.

Scammers still come calling door-to-door, asking for money for **non-existent charities** (Take your time, ask for the charity's tax number, ask for literature and info on how to contact them if you decide to donate later). Watch out for 'contractors' who offer a **"free inspection"** of your roof or furnace, etc., say that you need an urgent repair and press you for a quick decision, e.g. *this offer expires this weekend!!*

These are just a few of the schemes Edna touched on. Check out the presentation slides on the branch web-site, under "Virtual Presentations" at www.federalretirees.ca/fraservalleywest.

Virtual 'Meet and Chat'

Personal Planning

Thursday, March 10, 2021—1 p.m. on Zoom !

It could happen to anyone, right? So...Who is going to be your "decider" if you were in an accident and unable to communicate your wishes?

Please join us for a very informative and important presentation by Terry Wright, a volunteer facilitator with COSCO. Find out about Personal planning – which includes making arrangements for while you are alive but when you may need assistance due to an illness, injury or disability.

In this workshop, the wisdom of having a personal plan is emphasized. We will review the three legal documents you can use (**Representation Agreements, Power of Attorney and Advance Directives**) to express your wishes regarding personal care, certain financial matters and end of life care if you are no longer able to speak for yourself. We also will touch on the concept of advance care planning and the importance of having a Will.

Email Ilene at imfika@shaw.ca to be invited to this zoom meeting. Look forward to seeing you there!

Your Branch board

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In Memoriam — Federal Retirees' national magazine, SAGE, has an "In Memoriam" section to honour recently deceased members by listing their name and Branch. To have the name of your loved one included in the "In Memoriam" section, please contact **Steve Sawchuk** in writing (by mail or email). Please note that SAGE is published quarterly and branch submissions are required several weeks in advance. For the upcoming Summer issue, submissions are required by March 31, 2021. In addition, If you would like to post a memory piece or photo on the [branch web-site](http://www.federalretirees.ca/fraservalleywest), please contact us at info@nafrfraser valleywest.ca