

Vice President and Advocacy Report March 8, 2021

By Rose Bowker

This last year, I was the branch advocacy liaison once again. 2020 has definitely been a challenging one with the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Virtual meetings and electronic campaigns were well-supported by our regional contacts and national office.

National Public Service Week (NPSW) Coffee Break June 14 to 20, 2020–

- On June 12, 2020, we recognized and honored current federal employees for their service to Canadians by sending posters designed by national office: “Thank you for being there for us and for all Canadians during the coronavirus pandemic” along with an email message to 10 federal employers for distribution to employees. This poster also highlighted membership awareness and our local branch.
- A standout article and banner ad with PGMatters.com was prepared through consultations with National office. The standout article was very informational and featured our national messaging. It comprised of an interview with President, Deb Nilsen. Deb did a great job for this interview. This went live on June 15, 2020 and can be viewed at: <https://www.princegeorgematters.com/standout/national-organization-urges-canadians-to-celebrate-public-servants-2436231> . The cost for this advertising was \$525. It is noted that PGMatters.com has notified us that we can do an additional complimentary article. We will go ahead with that sometime after the AGM with a focus on our national long term care and home care advocacy.

Due to in-person restrictions into June of this year, our branch will likely proceed in the same way as 2020 for NPSW this June 2021.

Reach 338 Advocacy Work Federal MPs–

Reach 338 is our national strategy to ensure that the National Association of Federal Retirees, our members and our key priorities are seen and understood by every single Member of Parliament in all 338 constituencies across Canada. Our branch was selected as one of the first 75 branches to participate in and implement this strategy.

The national strategic plan covers the period between July 2019 and June 2024. The 3 main goals are:

- 1) To advocate in the best interest of our members and seek to be recognized as a respected national voice supporting secure, healthy and dignified retirement for federal retirees and all Canadians;
- 2) To promote membership retention and growth;
- 3) To pursue organizational excellence at all levels of the Association.

As per national office recommendations, three members of our board were selected to attend the virtual meetings scheduled with MPs. Deb N was the delegated speaker. Speaking points were prepared from national office materials to keep our message consistent. 3 meetings were held via the Zoom license controlled by Rick Devlieger from regional office.

We started reaching out to the 3 MPs within our branch borders in mid-September 2020 with customized introductory letters via email and Zoom meetings were held:

- The Honorable Todd Doherty MP, Cariboo-Prince George, October 13, 2020 at 11 am
- The Honorable Bob Zimmer MP, Prince George-Peace River-Northern Rockies, Nov 2, 2020 at 2 pm
- The Honorable Taylor Bachrach MP, Skeena-Bulkley Valley, Nov 4, 2020 at 1:30 pm

Deb N presented a brief history of our organization; referenced the Meet and Greet event held in October 2019 for federal candidates of which MP Doherty and MP Zimmer were in attendance; reinforced our key priorities; and then went on to discuss our long-term care and home care issues and campaign as per national office directive.

All MPs were extremely receptive to our position on LT care and home care as well as our association's priorities. Thank you letters were sent, via email, along with National office Key Messages for: National Seniors Strategy, Veterans, Pharmacare, Retirement Income Security, Long-Term Care and Home Care, as well, the MP Briefing booklet.

Two of the meetings were recorded and will be posted to our website. The NDP MP, Taylor Bachrach did not want the meeting recorded. A summary of that meeting is available upon request by emailing nafr@shaw.ca

National office is preparing for Reach 338 activities for an expected federal election in 2021.

Reach 338 Advocacy Work Provincial Candidates and MLAs Via Email–

National office initiated a BC Provincial Election Letter Campaign to highlight our organization and its current key priority of older adult care. Introductory letters were sent, via email, on October 16, 2020 to 18 candidates from 3 parties within 8 ridings in our branch boundaries. A publication from our National office regarding “Transforming health care in BC” was attached.

On January 11, 2021, congratulation letters were sent, via email, to the 8 successful candidates (MLAs) within the branch boundaries. These letters congratulated them; followed up on our letter dated October 16, 2020; and reattached the above noted publication.

John Rustad, MLA for Nechako Lakes requested research on examples of other care regimes where their outcomes were significantly better than BC and Canada. We reached out to national office for assistance with a response for this MLA. On February 8, 2021 we sent him a response.

Bounce Back Program COVID-19

In December 2020, I attended a virtual presentation hosted by branch #04. A Bounce Back Coach with the Canadian Mental Health Association delivered a presentation on “Coping with Covid” using the Bounce Back Program. This program is designed for people experiencing mild to medium /common Covid side effects such as low mood, anxiety, or depression. There are 3 ways to access the Bounce Back Program in BC (all free):

- Bounce Back Coaching – www.bouncebackbc.ca
This includes up to 6 telephone sessions over 3-6 months to help keep you on track and offer support as you work thru the program material. This is a free program for BC residents, but you need a referral from a doctor or nurse practitioner,
- Bounce Back Online – www.bouncebackonline.ca
This online option is for people who prefer to work independently. You have access to 20 modules that include workbooks, worksheets and videos. You set your own schedule and get the tools you need to help yourself.
- Bounce Back Video – www.bouncebackvideo.ca
This is a good way to ease into the program. The video provides practical tips on managing sleep, confidence, healthy living, and other aspects. Use access code to register: **bbsdaybc**

This information will be posted on our website after the AGM.

Other Points of Interest

- National Seniors Day, October 1: We would like to host a Seniors' Coffee Day event. This will depend on COVID restrictions.
- Membership Renewals: For those of you who are not on monthly pension cheque deductions / Dues Deduction at Source (DDS), forms available on the national website for you to convert to, should you wish to do so.
- Lobbying on Health: According to a recent article in Hill Times Research, Federal Retirees is ranked among the top 50 organizations lobbying on health for seniors.