

CALGARY BRANCH NEWSLETTER

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NAFR PRESIDENT'S REPORT SUMMER 2016



A wonderfully-mild winter bodes well for a productive spring and summer; we have much for which to be thankful. Our Board has been augmented by new additions which were badly needed and our Roster of Volunteers has been increased through our ongoing efforts to provide more volunteer training. This enables our office, located at 302 in the Kerby Centre to operate

more efficiently as we try to keep up with the changes and updates evolving from our National Office.

Specialized computer training for our Board members with particular jobs are being planned in conjunction with our Alberta Regional Meeting to take place in Red Deer in October. Hopefully, in co-operation with new systems being put in place by our NAFR National Office, we will be able to be on top of membership renewals and expiry dates

We were recently advised that new PSHCP Monthly Contribution Rates came into effect on April 1, 2016. These new rates started with the March 30, 2016 Pension cheques. However, if you are in receipt of Canada's Guaranteed Income Supplement, relief is available to allow you to remain at the 25:75 (retiree/employer) rate. To receive this benefit, you must advise your Pension office of your particular status.

Our National Board is still pursuing legal action to have the courts declare the government's actions on PSHCP unlawful. As a not-for-profit organization our strength comes in our numbers of members – over 170,000 Nationally with 84 Branches. In Calgary alone, we have over 4,000 members in our Branch. As many of us get older, it is important for all of us to continue to seek out new retirees not only from the public service, but from all branches of the Military and RCMP as well as current federally employed personnel. This will enable us to continue to provide new and Improved programs for all of our membership.

We have been requested by a National Office staff member who is co-ordinating a Canada 150 project to seek stories from our membership. This is an opportunity for you to showcase some of your contributions to our country with inspiring accounts of the work you have done on behalf of Canada and all it stands for. Many Canadians may not be familiar with the commitment, the drive, the resourcefulness and the talent of the public service, including the Canadian Forces and RCMP. If you are a spouse of a retiree, this may be a chance for you to tell their story as seen from your perspective. As a spouse myself and a long-time member of our Association, I feel that I just might be able to share highlights of the life of the man who was my husband. I hope we hear from many of you.

NAFR Membership Renewal Reminder

- [Pay by monthly pension withdrawal](#). This is the most popular choice. You can have your membership dues deducted monthly from your superannuation payments by downloading and returning a form authorizing Public Works and Government Services Canada to do so. Participation in deduction of dues at source is voluntary and can be revoked at any time by notifying the Association's National Office. The amount works out to \$3.32 or \$4.31 per month on direct deductions at source (DDS) from your pension. *(Unfortunately this method of payment is not yet applicable to judges' pensions and judges' survivor allowances).*
- [Pay by Credit Card](#). You can pay your membership fee annually by credit card and get instant access to all member benefits. Payments can be made using the National Website, phone us at **403-265-0773**, or come to our office in Room 302 of the Kerby Centre at **1133 7th Ave. SW**, if you require assistance.
- [Pay by Cheque](#). You can also pay by cheque if you prefer; simply download our application form and return it with your cheque, phone us at **403-265-0773**, or come to our office in Room 302 of the Kerby Centre at **1133 7th Ave. SW**, if you require assistance.

Calgary Satellite Offices

[Okotoks/Foothills Coffee Sessions:](#)

Please contact Michelle Lucia @ 403-938-7397, email gmluchia@shaw.ca
or Doug Raynor at 403-9951786, email draynor@shaw.ca for information.

[Camrose Coffee Sessions:](#)

Please contact Jette Finsborg at 403-609-0598, email jfinsborg@gmail.com for information.

Alberta physicians still failing on after-hours care, regulator finds ([Keith Gerein, Edmonton Journal](#))

Despite repeated warnings over the past year to change their practices, Alberta physicians continue to have poor rates of providing evening and weekend care to their patients.

A new survey of doctor's offices conducted by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta found well under half were compliant with standards requiring after-hours access.

"It's disappointing. We have a higher expectation of professional behaviour by our physicians than what we see here," college registrar Trevor Theman said Friday. "This is all about patient safety and continuity of care, so we have to be better than that."

The standards make clear doctors' offices must do more than provide an answering machine message directing their patients to call 911 or go to the nearest hospital or walk-in clinic after 5 p.m.

Yet that was what college staff found too often when they conducted a survey over the 2014 Christmas break. Of the 117 doctor's offices that were called after hours, fewer than 30 per cent were in compliance with the standards.

After rewriting the rule to make it more explicit and vowing to step up enforcement, the college conducted a similar, but larger survey in late 2015 to see if members had adapted.

The results showed little to no improvement. Of the 296 offices with a functional phone number, 22 per cent had procedures in place that adhered to the standards. Another 21 per cent referred callers either to Health Link or to a hospital emergency department, which means they were in compliance only if they had set up a formal arrangement with those services ahead of time.

"This result is simply unacceptable," Theman wrote in a pointed letter to members published Friday. "This year we kept a log of the offices we called. Every one of these offices will receive follow-up by us. "Please understand that after-hours availability ... is not optional. It's not just 'nice to do.' It's necessary, and, as your college, we're going to keep at this until we're satisfied that the membership has coverage in place."

He said the college hopes to have a program in place later this year to essentially audit physician practices to make sure they are aware and are adhering to all the college's standards.

Many doctors have balked at the idea of being on call 24 hours a day to answer often frivolous health concerns, but Theman said there are other ways for physicians to comply with the rules. They could make themselves available to specific patients by phone, line up an on-call physician to respond, or make arrangements ahead of time with a clinic or emergency department. Many doctors who have joined a Primary Care Network or work in smaller communities take turns as the on-call physician.

Theman said after-hours care is particularly important for patients who might need followup after being discharged from the hospital, or those waiting for critical test results. Such results are often best received and interpreted by the doctor who knows the patient's medical history, or by another designated doctor who has been properly briefed on the situation.

kgerein@postmedia.com
twitter.com/keithgerein

APRIL NAFR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and LUNCHEON – Fort Calgary – Please arrive at 10:00 am to be seated.

Date: Friday, April 15, 2016 Annual General Meeting followed by Luncheon

Location: Fort Calgary, 750 - 9 Ave. SE, Calgary, Alberta, T2G 5E1, 403-290-1875

Meal:

**Buttermilk scones with butter
Tomato and roasted red pepper soup
Pork tenderloin with mushroom ragout
Chef potato/Chef vegetable
Dessert plate of squares
Freshly brewed Coffee and tea served**

Speaker: David Riffel, Regional Services Officer - RSO Transition Report/New name and duties plus concerns; Branch Administration; and an open discussion on issues/concerns with the NAFR and where it goes now!

Remember to reserve a seat by calling the office at 403-265-0773 two to three weeks before the function. We have to pay for the number of meals ordered once we have committed to that number, therefore, if you cannot attend the luncheon, it is very important to please phone the office and cancel five days before the luncheon.

****Please remember our Veterans; food donations will be much appreciated.**

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS

If you change your address and forget to notify us, we have no reliable way off tracing you to your new address. This means that you are unlikely to receive the national quarterly or other valuable information that we forward from time to time. If you move, please take a few moments to complete and mail the following form to FSNA Calgary Branch, Room 302 Kerby Centre, 1133 – 7th Avenue S.W., Calgary, AB T2P 1B2.

NAME _____ MEMBERSHIP # _____

NEW ADDRESS _____

OLD TELEPHONE NUMBER _____ NEW PHONE # _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

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