

BRANCH REPORT

AB16 | Calgary & District

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President's message

I hope this newsletter finds you well as you get ready for the winter season. This is typically a busy time of year for everyone. Many of us are planning holiday get-togethers, shopping for gifts, deciding on winter getaways, and volunteering in our communities.

Our branch board and volunteers are also busy planning for the upcoming year. We have updates and opportunities to share regarding member recruitment, activities, the need for board members or volunteers, and advocacy efforts. We are also exploring new ways to connect with our members and potential members, such as organizing drop-in coffee sessions, bringing board members to local communities (we held meet and greet gatherings in Airdrie and Cochrane this year), and hosting online information sessions.

The branch board has been actively reviewing and updating our current operational plan, which is derived from the national strategic plan. In October, we participated in a full-day session to identify branch objectives and expected results are in key areas such as advocacy, veterans' services and membership retention and recruitment. Since a new national strategic plan will be presented in 2024, we will be revising our branch plan next year as well. In the Fall 2023 issue of Sage, our national president Roy Goodall mentioned that branches will be consulted about goals, priorities and how deliver services to members. We will share more details as the planning proceeds.

That same month, we participated in a regional meeting with directors and representatives from all seven Alberta branches. Topics at that meeting ranged from health care challenges in Alberta to how to effectively advocate for our association's priorities.

PARTNER BANNER

In November, we hosted a branch members event at the Carriage House Hotel and Conference Centre. Details of the event are available on our branch Facebook page.

Recruitment of members and volunteers remains essential to our association. We are actively seeking new members, and the annual Mega Recruitment Drive runs until the end of December.

Our association relies on the dedication and commitment of board members and volunteers at the branch, district, and national levels. At the branch board level, we anticipate several director vacancies in 2024. Positions are two-years in duration, and we are seeking individuals who are passionate about retirement security, veterans' rights, and health care policy for older Canadians. Specific information about the nomination and selection processes will be available in early 2024. The election for directors will be held at our Branch Annual Meeting in April 2024.

If you are considering a board position, I invite you to join us at one of our upcoming board meetings. This will give you a view of what we do at the branch level, and it's an opportunity to speak to board members about how you can get involved. Contact our office by email or phone, and we can share details with you.

A major challenge for the Association has been the transition to the new provisions of the Public Service Health Care Plan and the services of Canada Life as the new plan administrator. This branch report includes information about that transition.

In my Fall 2023 message, I mentioned a presentation by Perry Tsergas from spark*advocacy. Our branch vice-president, John Bakator, is leading our transition to new ways of engaging and communicating with our local members. An overview of the initial steps for our marketing strategy are included in this issue.

Until next time...



Sincerely,

Roloin Vetsch
Branch President

For Your Information:



Remember, 2024 is the 60th anniversary of the Calgary & District Branch and we will be celebrating that milestone, so if you have ideas or submissions to help us all celebrate, let us know by emailing us at: calgarybranch@federalretirees.ca

An Update on Canada Life

Note that this article was prepared in late September 2023, to meet publishing deadlines. Please contact our office if you have any questions on current developments. Information is also available on the National Association of Federal Retirees website by searching PSHCP.

The transition to Canada Life from Sun Life as the provider for the Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHCP) has not been seamless, to say the least.

Members have experienced problems from the start – from enrolling in the new plan, to filling prescriptions and filing claims. All have resulted in delays, stress, heartbreaking situations, and consequences for their health. At the Association, we take these problems seriously and continue to advocate for improved service on the part of Canada Life.

The Calgary Branch has had many phone calls and emails from members. We have answered each email and phone call but unfortunately, we cannot contact Canada Life on your behalf. We encourage you to contact Canada Life at:

Phone Number: 1-855-415-4414

Email: pscp@canadalife.com

Canada Life now has a “Chat with Us” which you can access once you sign into your Canada Life Account.

If you wish to file an appeal the link for the appeal process is:

[Public Service Health Care Plan | How to Submit an Appeal \(pshcp.ca\)](#)

National Office has sought solutions since the beginning of the transition. In early July, our CEO and staff met with the Treasury Board minister’s staff and, as the pensioners representative, our Association president called for an in-person meeting with the PSHCP Partners Committee, which happened in early August, again to seek solutions. National Office had a meeting planned with minister Anita Anand, the new Treasury Board president, in early October.

The Calgary Branch is also working with Canada Life to determine the correct application of the Public Service Health Care Plan Directive on the payment of claims being made by our members.

Calgary & District Branch – Communications

The last Provincial election was eye-opening concerning political candidates' calculations regarding older people residing in their electoral divisions. In short, the refusal or unavailability to meet with leaders from different organizations whose members are essentially older persons can best be described as “marginalized.”

Accordingly, we have identified the need to be “top of mind” for our policy and lawmakers. It's not an easy task and not an easy ask. We have implemented a more robust course of action to achieve our goal of being “top of mind.” Our Association conducts many overlapping activities that need to be better known by everyone. Based on the issues identified at the last Annual Members Meeting in Ottawa, it became clear that all branches must ramp up their online presence and communications channels.

We are utilizing a social media consultant to develop a more disciplined approach to using platforms like Facebook and Instagram. The most essential thing members can do is amplify our messaging through social media. So, we ask that you “like” our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/NAFRYYC>) and share all posts on your Facebook page. This is the version of telling two friends, who can tell two friends, etc.

Liking our Facebook Page means you will promptly get articles, posts, and videos important to all our members.

Cochrane Meet & Greet plus federalretirees 60th Anniversary - held on August 30, 2023



Federal Retirees Members Information

National : <https://www.federalretirees.ca/>

Calgary & District: <https://federalretirees.ca/calgary>

Facebook - [National Association of Federal Retirees - Calgary YYC](#)

For questions or inquiries, please phone 403-265-0773 or email calgarybranch@federalretirees.ca