**RETIRED TEACHERS’ OF ONTARIO**

 **LES ENSEIGNANTES ET ENSEIGNANTS RETRAITÉS DE L’ONTARIO**

**REPORT TO THE ACER-CART 2016 AGM**

**Major Concerns & Initiatives:**

**Federal Level:**

* We continue to be concerned with the need for the government to institute a national pharmacare program where people of Canada have equal access to essential medications, purchased under a national formulary resulting in safe, cost-effective drugs. To this end, President Foster and Executive Director Grieves took part in the Canadian Health Coalition’s Lobby Day on Parliament Hill, to meet with MPs on this issue.
* Bill C-27, An Act to amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985, is a concern for us as well. Although if it comes to pass, it does not affect us directly, it could be the ‘thin edge of the wedge’. We have met with NAFR (The National Association of Federal Retirees) on this issue.

**Provincial Level**:

* Enhancing our external relationship has been very much a focus of what we do.
	+ We have had a very positive meeting with Minister Damerla, Ministry of Seniors Affairs. She and her staff were very interested in a number of our programs and we have had call backs from her staff for further inquiries.
	+ We also met with MPP John Fraser, Parliamentary Assistant, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Here we focused on our concerns regarding the shortage of Geriatricians in Ontario and Canada and our document in response to a discussion paper entitled “Patients First”, proposed by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.
	+ We left those meetings with both Ministries knowing who we are and that we are willing to work with them on issues that would affect the seniors of this province. Meetings have also occurred
* We have also joined in partnerships with Seniors’ Voice, Elder Abuse Ontario, the Canadian Health Coalition and Seniors Voice.

**Main Activities**

* Our draft Strategic Plan, is now our approved five year plan, with a new Mission, Vision and Strategic Goals. Our three main strategic goals are: to improve the lives of members and seniors (reflecting our Mission), to be the trusted voice for the broader education community, and to expand the membership base.
* Our governance restructuring is continuing, with approval in principal of the major changes to our constitution and by-laws. October will see the specific changes brought to Senate for approval. The most significant change is that we are moving our incorporation from Ontario, to Federal jurisdiction.
* We continued to support the fundraising effort being undertaken by our **Charitable Foundation** which aims to raise funds to increase the numbers of professional and support staff qualified and trained in geriatric care as well as to support research and programs that improve the quality of life of seniors in Ontario and Canada.

**History**

Established in 1968, RTO/ERO is in its 49th year of providing excellent programs and services to its 75,500 members. While the majority of these members are retired teachers, RTO/ERO welcomes all retired employees who have worked in some aspect of the education system, including school and board administrative and support staff, early childhood educators and child care workers, and college/university faculty and support staff. We continue to aggressively market to these sectors who currently make up our associate membership.

This year, CURAC (College and University Retiree Associations of Canada) has recommended RTO/ERO as a secondary health insurance provider to its members, which has resulted in a large influx of members from colleges and universities across Canada.

Our Executive Director Jim Grieve leads a dedicated team of six senior staff and sixteen administrative support staff in our Provincial Office. RTO/ERO is governed by a six-member Provincial Executive, elected annually at the fall Senate meeting. We own our Health Plans which are managed by members through the provincial Health Services & Insurance Committee; the plans are administered by Johnson Inc. There are over 95,000 insured individuals in our group insurance program, which includes members and their dependents.

**Communication**

We strive to keep our membership appraised of all that happens provincially both with hard copy and electronic versions of all our publications.

* *RENAISSANCE*, our award winning magazine, is published four times a year and sent directly to members’ residences except for 6,000 of our members who receive it electronically on their mobile devices.
* *LIAISON*, a newsletter sent directly to Provincial Executive and provincial committee members, and District Executive members, is published several times a year. It is also available for all members to read in the Members’ Centre of our provincial website.

We have produced a number of Webinars to keep our members updated on current issues and are active on social media.

**Standing Committees**

RTO/ERO has several standing committees consisting of its members and supported by senior and administrative support staff. These committees deal with: audit, communications, health services and insurance, member services (recruitment, travel, goodwill), pension and retirement concerns, and political advocacy.

The Provincial Executive also has committees dealing with the provincial and District constitutions, awards, and nominations for committee positions and the constitution

RTO/ERO annually provides grants to various community organizations in which District members are involved. The organizations apply for support and their requests are adjudicated by a committee of members; annually up to $100,000 is awarded. Additionally, Districts may recommend charitable organizations to which a $10,000 donation is provided by RTO/ERO to one selected by the Provincial Executive and approved by Senate. This year this donation will be given to the Stopgap, a company that provides access to businesses that have a one-step obstacle to their entry.

Martha Foster
President/ Présidente

RTO-ERO