



## RETIRED TEACHERS ORGANIZATION OF THE NOVA SCOTIA TEACHERS UNION

### MEMBER REPORT 2023

#### Major concerns of our association

##### Federal Concerns

The announcement of the Canada Dental Care Plan (CDCP) in December 2023 was welcome for many of our members, however there is much confusion and uncertainty as to who qualifies, which dentists will participate in the program and what services will be covered. Many of our members signed on to the NSTU Group Insurance plan prior to retirement and it appears they will not qualify, we have encouraged our members to proceed with caution when considering how to proceed.

While the National Pharmacare announcement in February brought some long awaited good news, coverage is currently limited to diabetic supplies and contraceptives. We are anxious to see the program expanded to provide greater coverage across the range of medical requirements of our members.

##### Provincial Level

The Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care continues to focus on Seniors in our province. As a result of the many issues identified during the pandemic, significant attention has been paid to the long term care facilities and residences and progress has been made in both availability and care standards. Programs such as CORAH (Centre of Rural Aging and Health) has been established in community colleges in rural areas of the province to provide programs and activities for seniors in their own community. CAPABLE (Community Aging In Place, Advancing Better Living for Elders) is a home-based program designed to improve in home safety and function. In addition, several grant and rebate programs have been established to enable seniors to remain in their homes. As is the case across Canada, the housing crisis is hitting seniors hard and is a growing problem.

##### *Relationship with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU)*

Throughout the year, we met three times with NSTU as the Liaison Committee; included in the committee is Ryan Lutes, the President of the NSTU, Steve Brooks, Executive Director of the NSTU and Simon Wilkin, Acting Assistant Director Executive and Bill Berryman, Ambrose White and Alyson Hillier.

Topic number one in our discussion continues to be the unfunded liability of our pension plan. Since all our members, who retired since 2006, have not received the cost-of-living increase since they retired, this is becoming a major concern for our members. We continue to wait for the release of the non-binding recommendations from the Pension Review Panel which was established in October 2020. The purpose of the review was to address the shortfall; to date the results / recommendations have not been released.

In June 2023, we were advised that a security breach that affected approximately 100 000 government employees (active and retired) had occurred. This affected many our members and created considerable concern. TransUnion security monitoring was offered to those affected and this will continue for five years.

## Strategic Planning

In August 2023, we held our annual planning session, our discussions focused on redesigning our RTO website to provide a secure and user friendly site which will meet the needs of the all our members. We conducted several discussions with Branch Presidents and in January, we contracted a web designer to carry out the work.

Other items we have been focused on:

- We held our 4<sup>th</sup> Symposium with the theme of “**We are All in This Together**”. It featured speakers on the African Community in NS, Frailty and Your Health, “Aging” Standards for NS Long Term Care and Inclusion and Diversity. 70 members across the province came to Halifax for a full day of learning, fun and getting to know the RTO.
- The annual Golf Tournament was hosted by AER – Baie Sainte-Marie in September at Clare Golf and Country Club in Comeauville NS, with approximately 70 members participating.
- In March, the Kings Branch hosted the Curling Bonspiel at the Glooscap Curling Club with 8 teams participating.
- At our Legacy Foundation AGM on April 15<sup>th</sup>, we granted 12 awards with a total of \$11,500.00 being distributed.
- We are pleased to see the Branches continuing to access funds from the Branch Initiative Program Fund (BIP) to support Branch activities. During the 2023 year, 46 grants were awarded for a total of \$26,457.60 in funds distributed.
- We continue to promote the health benefits available to our members through our group insurance plan and Carepath. It is important that our members are familiar with what is available through their health insurance plans and when changes occur them.
- We continue to promote the RTO to active teachers with information and participation in the NSTU pre-retirement seminars. Last year 70% of new retirees joined the RTO.

We have planned our 2024 Annual General Meeting for May 16<sup>th</sup> and are pleased to welcome all interested members of the organization to attend. In addition to the regular AGM business, twelve resolutions will be presented with the opportunity for members to ask questions and debate the issues. The meeting will be preceded by a Dinner and reception the evening before.

We appreciate the opportunity to work with our colleagues in ACER-CART and members across the country for the on-going support and leadership as we endeavor to “advance, promote, and protect the welfare of our members.”

Respectfully submitted,

Alyson Hillier  
May 2024