



# CURC Newsletter

Congress of Union Retirees of Canada (CURC) Feb. 2020

## *A Message from our National President, Bill Chedore*

Sisters and Brothers,

This is our second newsletter in the last couple of months and the first for 2020. Your response was impressive when I had put out the call back in October/November of last year. We had to put out more than 1 edition so as not to overwhelm you with print. Frankly it's a good problem to have.

This edition will cover a number of articles from various CURC Provincial Federations and Area Councils of union retirees across Canada. As we want to publish several editions throughout the year, we encourage you to send us stories of what you are doing in your area or province. We believe it is very important to make your work known across the country.

The coming year will be busy and will not lack in terms of issues we will all have to address. Many of you will be taking on provincial governments like Ford's, Kenny's and their ilk, who have no real affection for the working class, but will say things that will be directed at folks who are looking for someone to blame for all the problems of the world.

Additionally, many corporations are taking their lead from these right-wing politicians, to attack workers collective agreements and rights. The CO-OP Refinery in Regina is a prime example.

CURC will be working with the CLC and the Labour Movement to fight back against the right-wing attacks.

We will be pressuring governments at all levels to secure protections and services for seniors and retirees.

CURC will be represented at the CLC Convention in May in Vancouver. CURC has submitted several resolutions for debate at the convention.

We will also be participating in the CLC Lobby on the Hill on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>.

We will be involved in the campaign to have the federal government implement single payer Universal PharmaCare.

**Website:** You can find information about CURC on the website

<http://unionretiree.ca/> Information such as:

- Provincial organizations, their president who sit on the council and their executive.
- Local CURC area Councils
- Pre-retirement courses being offered
- Current affairs
- Member benefits - Canadian Benefits, Dignity Memorial, Insuranceland, Union Savings

We will be part of the campaign to protect pensions and change bankruptcy laws in Canada so that employees come first on the list in receiving their pensions and benefits before the banks and corporate executives.

Sisters and Brothers, thank you for all you do. Keep up the fight and encourage more retirees to join CURC as an individual member to be part of an important collective of senior activists who care.

In Solidarity

Bill

## Demographics and disruption demand new skills in Canada's health-care sector

By John Stackhouse Contributor TorStar

Fri., Nov. 15, 2019

Canada is on the verge of a silver tsunami, and our health-care sector isn't ready.

The rapid aging of our population through the 2020s is about to strain our hospitals, clinics and long-term care facilities, and technology will bridge only part of the gap. As much hope and hype as we see in robotic caregivers, virtual physicians and wearable sensors, we'll need more humans in health care, and more human skills than ever.

The past decade has shown how reliant health care is on skilled labour; it's been one of the fastest-growing sectors for employment, and shows no signs of letting up. A new report from RBC estimates only 17 per cent of health-care jobs are at significant risk of automation, compared with 34 per cent in the overall economy. Indeed, the sector will need an extra 370,000 workers and professionals over the next five years.

That presents an opportunity for governments and employers worried about job displacement in the 2020s. Hospitals and homes will need not only more people, as advanced technologies improve, they'll need more of the human skills — communications, collaboration, critical thinking — that have always been central to health care and can be found in abundance in other sectors.

According to the RBC report, Paging Dr. Data, health care can provide a career path for one million Canadians who are currently at risk of losing their jobs to automation. That doesn't mean a retail clerk can become a brain surgeon, but there will be plenty of new positions in health care that will need the basic skills that are common to other disrupted sectors. Think about the truck driver who can

become a paramedic, or retail worker who can become a co-ordinator in a busy outpatient clinic.

The sector may also see a surge in demand for the digital and data skills that are in short supply everywhere, which poses a problem for a sector that still relies on fax machines. Take artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning. They offer strong potential to predict disease, but for those technologies to be effective, medical practitioners first need to understand the underlying algorithms — and their limits — and then work with patients and fellow care workers to ensure the predictions are put to proper use. New kind of health-care teams will be needed, with data analytics at their core.

As a demographic crisis comes at us, we can't wait for the market to play out at its own pace. We urgently need a national skills agenda for health care, knowing it will take years to get right. The earliest baby boomers turned 73 this year, and are still a decade away from the average age at which people start to need long-term care. But by 2030, caring for seniors will consume 55 per cent of provincial health-care budgets, up from 45 per cent now.

A thoughtful skills agenda needs to break down the barriers that keep so many digital and data specialists from seeking careers in health care. A slow speed to innovate, insufficient capital budgets and limited space for entrepreneurs are chasing talent away. Our report calls for the creation and expansion of second-career bridge programs, such as second-entry nursing programs, to attract professionals into health care without requiring years of additional schooling.

A new focus on work-integrated learning for students from non-health schools, to expose a diversity of students to the sector, is also an idea worth pursuing.

We will also need a more thoughtful approach to life-long learning, to help displaced workers from other sectors develop some of the entry-level skills they'd need to get good jobs in health care.

Professional bodies, unions and educators have an opportunity to build those bridges, which will take a new willingness to experiment and innovate in collaboration with each other.

The health-care sector also has the opportunity to learn from other sectors already in the throes of a skills revolution, and share its own discoveries with the rest of the country. The experience of banks with blockchain or retailers with predictive analytics can help health-care planners map out the skills they'll need, just as the health sector's experience with robotics can inform other sectors moving quickly to an IOT (internet of things) world where every electronic device will have the power to make decisions.

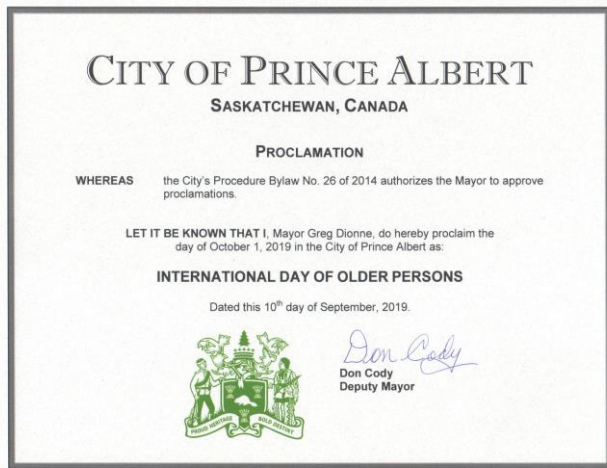
Canada is moving into the 2020s with a strong skills strategy but we need to continue to build on it. That includes a concerted effort to help address the challenges and opportunities facing our healthcare sector. Properly designed, this mix of technology, skills and innovative management can soften the landfall of the silver tsunami, and further prevent the cresting cost of health care from overwhelming government budgets. In this new machine age, our society's health will depend on it.

John Stackhouse is a senior vice-president at RBC. This opinion piece is based on excerpts from RBC's report *Paging Dr. Data: How the coming skills revolution can transform healthcare*.

**As a large number of seniors and retirees are being scammed both on the phone and through the internet, the website posted below is a great resource for protecting yourself against cybercriminals.**

**<https://www.getcybersafe.gc.ca/index-en.aspx>**

## International Day of Older persons – October 1, 2019 – Prince Albert Saskatchewan



The International Day of Older Persons event in Prince Albert was changed up this year from previous celebrations. In past years, many seniors were not able to physically attend the coffee party at Prince Albert City Hall, so this year the party was brought to them.

Cakes and assorted donuts, along with the City of Prince Albert proclamation were delivered to ten different senior care facilities in Prince Albert & area, courtesy the Saskatchewan Union Retirees Federation (SURF).

Locations receiving cake or donuts for October 1st celebration coffee parties with clients, residents & staff were: Prince Albert Community Service Centre, Abbeyfield House, River Breeze Assisted Living Care Home, Mak Lodge, Nelson Home, Kopera Care Home, Rivier Care Home, Prince Albert Heritage Centre, St. Joseph Senior's Club, and the River's Edge Care Home.



## **BC FEDERATION OF RETIRED UNION MEMBERS (BC FORUM) REPORT**

November 28, 2019

BC FORUM was active in the Federal election in several ways. I represented us on the CLC Pacific Region election working group. We published an edition of our ADVOCATE with a special section on the Federal election to inform our members on the important issues. It was mailed to our members so received prior to the Advance polls opening. It is posted to our website for viewing: [www.bcforum.ca](http://www.bcforum.ca) Communications from the CLC, BCFed and their Affiliates, our coalition partners and allies with action requests on the election or important information to be shared before members cast their ballot, were e-mailed to our Board and Labour Council delegates.

We have made many submissions re Federal, Provincial and local issues working with the BCFed and their affiliates, Labour Councils and our coalition partners and allies. At the Federal level, in September we made a submission to the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions regarding proposed revisions to the instruction Guide for Authorization of Amendments Reducing Benefits in Defined Benefit Pension Plans. Provincially working with the Federation of Labour, we made a submission to support a change to the BC Employment Standards Act to ensure that workers facing domestic and sexual violence have at least 10 days of paid leave. We also actively participated in the BCFed campaign to have important changes made to the BC Labour Code and Employment Standards Act

We continue to be activists on the Universal Pharmacare campaign working with both the CLC and the Canadian Health Coalition and our other allies on this issue of which there are way too many to mention which is excellent!!

We participate fully at Labour Councils where we have two BC FORUM delegates at most of the

Labour Councils and are appointing new members to fill vacant positions as I write this. Last night, I attended the New Westminster & District Labour Council meeting as a guest and will continue to do this with other councils.

We fully participate at the BC Federation of Labour. As President of BC FORUM I am an Executive Council member of the BCFed with full voice and vote. We are entitled to two delegates to the BCFed convention and I am invited to speak at each convention. We have members on various committees as well e.g. Political Action, Constitution and Structure and Women's Rights. We also participate in all Regional conferences that are held between conventions.

We are active members of the Council of Senior Citizens Organizations of BC (COSCO) where I am on the Executive and we have five BC FORUM delegates to the Council.

We are an affiliate of the National Pensioners Federation and participate in their regular conference calls and attend their conventions. BC FORUM's 1st Vice-President was elected as 1st Vice-President of the NPF at their September convention. We have a BC FORUM Regional Rep. on NPF's Health Care Committee.

We fully participate as a provincial federation in the Congress of Union Retirees of Canada at the Council and also at conventions of CURC.

At the BC Health Coalition, BC FORUM has a representative on the Seniors Working group.

BC FORUM has a display table at the CLC Winter School each of its Sunday Trade Fairs which happens for 5 weeks. I participate in the Ranking Officers session held each year of the school representing BC FORUM and as a member of BC Fed's Executive Council. We also have display tables at BC Fed Convention and its Affiliates' conventions where our BC FORUM banner is displayed along with our publication the ADVOCATE and our brochures re membership and our Group Benefit Plans offered to members which are six in total now. We also partner with an insurance company for a member benefit reduction in their insurance premiums.

Finally, our BC FORUM ADVOCATE that is published four times a year is a very important communication for our members to keep them connected on the important issues and our calls for their support and action. It is mailed to every member, all BC MLA's, all MP's, all Affiliates of the BC Fed and to all Labour Councils. All editions are posted to our website. It has a broader distribution through our coalition partners and allies. We also send out e-mail blasts to our members on important issues as we did for the United Nations International Day of Older Persons (Oct. 1) and of course when there are Municipal, Provincial and Federal elections held, incl. bi-elections. Our ADVOCATE also provides BC Fed Affiliates the opportunity to communicate on their various campaigns and to support them in their members' struggles and of course on the picket line!

BC FORUM has an active and engaged Board of Directors with 17 members from various BC Fed affiliates. The President of the BC Fed is our Chairperson as per our constitution. We also have a CLC Pacific Region staff member attend each of our Board meetings.

## London Area Council

Seasons greetings from London Area Council of CURC. We are sending a short report to describe our recent and also some of our ongoing activities.

At various Area Council meeting we attempt to bring in speakers to discuss issues which will be of interest to our members, such as Meals on Wheels, and having police speak about Fraud Protection.

On October 1st we flew the UN flag at City Hall, and had an information table at London's main library.

The end of November we put on a free pre-retirement seminar, as a community service.

We try to work with Age Friendly London by attending meetings and during their annual lunch

BC FORUM's office is located in the offices of the BC Federation of Labour and they provide us with the space. Our presence there reinforces for all that we are truly part of the BC Fed family and have been since 1995. In 2020, we will celebrate our 25th Anniversary!

To see a full list of the activities that BC FORUM is involved in and the information we communicate to our members, you can go to our website at [www.bcforum.ca](http://www.bcforum.ca) where all of our letters and submissions are posted to our website as well as our various communications with important information for our members to keep them connected to the movement.

In Solidarity

Diane Wood  
President  
BC Federation of Retired Union Member  
(BC FORUM)

forum we set up a table to encourage CURC membership, senior activity and volunteering.

A number of our members volunteered during the recent federal election. We created our own list of questions for candidates, which we sent to all, but only received responses from NDP.

We support ongoing campaigns around health care, Pharmacare, education, climate change and of course the fight to protect pensions and benefits.

We join picket lines and buses to rallies when we can.

We highlight the need for a National Senior's strategy as we continue to lobby for Seniors struggling to make ends meet. **We all deserve to age with dignity.**

All the best for happy healthy 2020.

## **Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Union Retirees (CURC)**

The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Union Retirees (CURC) is continuing to work to attract membership and to grow our organization.

We are pleased that the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour and the Newfoundland and Labrador Nurses Union have affiliated with CURC and are supporting our efforts. Our organization has made inroads across the province. We have met with the Labour Council in Corner Brook, with assistance and support from the Canadian Labour Congress representative and we are confident that the offer of support from that Council will yield good results.

Our organization has been invited to set up our booth at several CUPE conventions as well as the Federation of Labour Conventions. We have received support and meeting room space from CUPE, UNIFOR, NAPE and the NLFL.

Once again this year we were proud to have the Province fly the International Day of Older Persons Flag at the Confederation Building on October 1st.

Several members of our Executive attended the Seniors of Distinction Awards Luncheon where the Premier signed our Declaration recognizing the IDOP.

In addition, our Secretary -Treasurer, Sister Theresa Cook, worked with the City Council of Mount Pearl and was invited to their Council meeting on October 1st where that Council recognized the significance of the day and signed the Proclamation.

All members of our Executive were involved in both the Provincial and Federal election campaigns in the past few months. We are proud to have had three New Democrats elected provincially, including our new Leader. As well we were involved in the Federal Election where the NDP was successful in returning Jack Harris to Ottawa in the riding of St. John's East. Many thanks to Sister Laura English, a member of our Executive for her hard work in Jack's campaign. We also had great gains in St. John's West where Sister Judy Vanta from our Executive managed the campaign.

Our Federation holds regular meetings and we are in the process of setting up a day long meeting to plan our way forward and to develop strategies and set goals for building liaisons and expanding our organization's membership across the province.

Submitted by,

Marie St. Aubin

President

### **Contact CURC**

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Find us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/Congress-of-Union-Retirees-of-Canada-CURC-315702295180775/>



**Insuranceland** Discounted group auto and home insurance benefit for CURC members and spouses. For a quotation, all members except for Ontario please call 1-866-247-7700. Ontario members please call 1-800-243-9379 ext 2335. [www.insuranceland.ca](http://www.insuranceland.ca)

(to properly compare your CURC member plan, please have your latest renewal policy on hand)



**Canadian Benefits** The Benefit Plan for union retirees has been designed specifically for members of CURC.

The benefit program includes life insurance, accidental death and dismemberment and final expense benefit, extended health care and emergency medical travel insurance. Each of these benefits may be purchased independently or in combination.

For more information on the benefits, and for application forms, please do not hesitate to contact us at (416) 488-7755 or 1-800-268-0285 or [curc@canben.com](mailto:curc@canben.com). [www.canben.com/services/retiree-benefits](http://www.canben.com/services/retiree-benefits)



**Dignity** CURC members and their families can now take advantage of a 10% discount on funeral services through a network of 1,800 funeral, cremation and cemetery providers in Canada and the United States.

A local Dignity Memorial provider can help you get started making arrangements for yourself or a loved one. To find a Dignity Memorial provider near you, call 1-888-615-2277 or visit [www.DignityMemorial.com](http://www.DignityMemorial.com).



**Union Savings** As Canada's only not-for-profit, union run, members' benefits program. With almost two million individual members, Union Savings leverages its strength in numbers to negotiate savings and discounts for union

members, retirees and their families. Call 1-800-418-2990, email [unionsavings@unionsavings.ca](mailto:unionsavings@unionsavings.ca) or visit [unionsavings.ca](http://unionsavings.ca)

## CURC Member Benefits

[www.unionretiree.ca/benefits](http://www.unionretiree.ca/benefits)