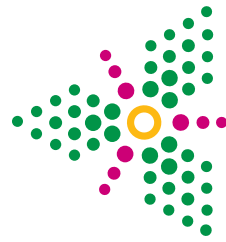


Protecting the pensions and enhancing the quality of life for all OMERS pensioners.



MROO

Municipal Retirees
ORGANIZATION ONTARIO

www.mroo.org

JULY 2018

NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS

IN THIS ISSUE...

- President's Message
- Ontario's Retirement Home Regulatory Authority
- Introducing the OMERS Comprehensive Plan Review
- Survey Says: Retirees Worry About Health Costs
- Making Withdrawals from Your RRIF
- Cost of Long-Term Care, a Retirement Planning Blind Spot
- Why Book Your Travel with a Travel Professional
- Robocall Scams
- The Social Value of OMERS
- The Value of MROO Membership

NEW ADDRESS? NEW INFO?

Please use the form at www.mroo.org, under the "Membership" tab OR Call **1-800-595-4497** and leave a message with your full name, phone number, and your new address/new info.

If you have a **MROO Health Plan policy**, please contact the ENCON Group, our Insurance Plan administrators, at 1-800-363-7861 or 905-755-2030.

You must notify OMERS directly (MROO cannot). Go to: www.omers.com/Contact Us for details or call 1-800-387-0813.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Much Hangs in the Balance

It is an interesting time for retirees and retirement incomes. It is a time when MROO's voice is needed more than ever to speak out about the concerns of retirees.

THE ONTARIO ELECTION

Significant Achievements

As I write this message in early June, we are on the cusp of Ontario's general election.

Over the past dozen years, the governing Liberals have taken great strides on a number of retirement income files. They expanded the CPP; introduced pooled registered pension plans; encouraged the consolidation of or pooled investment by smaller pension plans; created the Ontario Investment Management Agency; demanded greater transparency by company pension plans to their retirees.

And let's not forget Bill 206, which established OMERS as a fully independent and highly professional **DEFINED BENEFIT** pension plan! We trust that the next government will add to, not detract from, these achievements.

MROO's voice is needed more than ever to speak out about the concerns of retirees.

Inexplicable Mistakes

At the same time, that government did some things which we are at a loss to explain. Privatizing Hydro One is certainly one of those.

Similarly, they reduced the solvency funding requirement for defined-benefit company pension plans WITHOUT simultaneously protecting pensioners by requiring those companies to beef up the Ontario Pension Benefits Guarantee Fund. At least they should have required an increase to account for the inflation since that fund began in the 1980s. We trust that the next government will immediately require that retirees' pensions be guaranteed to at least the inflation-adjusted equivalent of the original Pension Benefits Guarantee.

The Danger of Downloading

Parties of all stripes have run deficits at one time or another...Conservative, Liberal, and NDP. At an appropriate time, for a limited period, and for appropriate purposes like major

continued on page 2 ●●

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED

infrastructure, it is not the end of the world. Most of us have borrowed to put a roof over our heads and raise our families. And, while we do not believe that governments are more inefficient than any other large bureaucracy (including private ones), governments must continue to struggle against poor customer service, inefficiency, and unwise spending.

What frightens me more, though, are parties that promise to slash taxes and other Provincial government revenues. What's wrong with that, you ask?

We have seen this movie before. One of two things will happen. Provincial public services will be reduced, and public infrastructure will be allowed to deteriorate. And/or the provincial government will cut back the funds it provides to local governments like municipalities, libraries, health units, school boards, or conservation authorities.

So, then what happens? Local governments either have to cut services themselves (shorter library hours, fewer buses, inadequate long-term care, fewer trees planted, etc.), OR they raise property taxes to fill the Provincially-made hole!

DOES MROO HAVE YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS? HERE'S HOW YOU CAN TELL....

IF you have an e-mail address, and IF you got an e-mail from MROO on June 7 concerning the OMERS Plan Review, we have your e-address.

But, if you did NOT receive our June 7 e-mail, we don't have your e-address.

Like most organizations, MROO will be using electronic communication more and more. We will even more regularly e-mail news bulletins to our members, for example. We will still send out our paper newsletters, but we are also happy to e-mail it to you, if you'd rather. You can now register on line for our zone meetings, and we'll e-mail you a confirmation.

You can add your e-address to our list by:

1. e-mailing mroo@istar.ca
2. put "e-mail" in the subject line
3. write your name and your city or town in the body of the e-mail, so we can identify you.

We'll keep in touch!

**MROO NEVER SHARES E-MAIL ADDRESSES
WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS!!!**

And that's when people start to ask: "Hey look. Why do those municipal people deserve a good pension plan when we don't even have decent bus service, when our roads are in worse shape, when our schools aren't being repaired, when our property taxes are increasing???" That's when people start to say: "Let's gut the OMERS Plan or convert it to an inferior Defined-Contribution plan !!!"

If you hear a provincial party promising to deprive the provincial government of money, WATCH OUT!

As I say, we have seen this movie before. Yes, governments of all stripes have sometimes spent money unwisely, and obviously shouldn't. But if you hear a party promising to deprive the provincial government of money to do what we want governments to do, WATCH OUT! Directly or indirectly, it could be a threat to our pension plan!

OMERS PLAN DESIGN REVIEW

Even closer to home, much hangs in the balance. The governing body of OMERS is the OMERS Sponsors Corporation, that makes decisions about OMERS's pension benefits, OMERS's contribution rates, and the long-term planning for OMERS' incoming and outgoing funding requirements. The OMERS Sponsors Corporation Board (SC) has an equal number of employer representatives and employee representatives (including one retiree representative, Paul Bailey).

Headwinds on the Horizon for OMERS

As is their duty, the SC has looked at the long-term trends that will affect our pension plan. To mention but a few of these factors:

- retirees are living longer (and their pensions have to be paid longer), a trend which shows no signs of stopping over the next 25 years
- OMERS' contribution rates are the highest among the large Ontario pension plans. Neither employees nor employers will have much appetite for increases
- The long phase-in of the expanded CPP begins next year. The contribution rates for the CPP will begin to

continued on page 3 ●●

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED

rise and then the CPP pension will begin to increase for those who have paid the increased contributions

- The number of employees in the OMERS plan seems unlikely to increase significantly over the long-term. Within 15 years, the OMERS Plan may well have as many retirees getting pensions as employees making contributions
- OMERS' recent investment returns are great, but investment opportunities in stable countries are becoming more limited, with more competitors chasing those limited opportunities
- Severe cyclical downturns in the Western economies are a sure thing. We just don't know when and we don't know how bad. 2008 won't be the last bad patch

MROO appreciates the fact that the SC has kept MROO and other retiree groups involved in this process. How fortunate that, in 2006, Don MacLeod, Paul Bailey, and I insisted that the Ontario Legislature provide for a retiree representative on the SC.

No decisions made yet

As I am writing this, the OMERS SC HAS MADE NO DECISIONS. Other large Ontario pension plans (the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan and the Hospitals of On-

tario Pension Plan) years ago removed their guarantee of pension inflation indexing, although those boards have adjusted those pensions for inflation on a year-to-year basis. Be that as it may, at this point the OMERS SC indicates that it has not yet determined what or how much it intends to change.

Today's Retirees would not be affected

Remember, ANY CHANGE MADE NOW TO THE OMERS PLAN DESIGN WOULD NOT AFFECT TODAY'S PENSIONERS!

I repeat, if the SC decided to change something, it would apply ONLY to OMERS service from this point forward. IT WOULD NOT APPLY TO US AS RETIREES. OUR PENSIONS, including the inflation-indexing guarantee, WOULD CONTINUE UNCHANGED!

continued on page 4 ●●

WANT TO HELP?

Zone 2 of MROO is seeking help in the London / St. Thomas area. The positions of Alternate Director and Ambassador need to be filled.

- Are you an OMERS retiree with a little time on your hands?
- Are you interested in spreading the MROO message about the advantages of membership?
- Do you have good communication and organizational skills?

If you are interested, please call or e-mail
Dianne Hern, Director, Zone 2
519-271-3590
hern1949@rogers.com
or MROO at 1-800-595-4497 mroo@istar.ca



A camera-shy member at the May 8 2018 Zone 7 members meeting in Sudbury

MROO FALL MEMBER MEETINGS

Each fall the directors of MROO's largest zones arrange not just spring membership meetings but also meetings in the fall. Later in the summer, look for notification about meetings in Kitchener-Waterloo and Newmarket in early October.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED

MROO's position

To this point, here is what MROO has advised the SC.

- We accept the SC's analysis that the OMERS plan faces longer-term challenges, and that the SC is reasonable to be looking now at how to deal with the challenges. As the saying goes, if the roof needs fixing, the time to do it is when the sun is still shining, not when it's raining.
- At the same time, do not rush into a decision. Take the time to weigh all options, get input from stakeholders and members, provide a solid understandable justification for any suggested change, and educate members about the rationale for and impacts of any suggested change.
- Whatever other change may be made, it should be mandatory that all employees of OMERS employers be enrolled in the OMERS plan, including part-time, seasonal and contract employees.

Elsewhere in this newsletter is an article by the SC indicating the consultation and decision-making process it plans to follow. MROO will stay involved.

ENJOY THE SUMMER!

The lilacs are in bloom, the fish are biting on the Bay of Quinte, and so are the bugs! Summer is here. We had the pleasure of seeing 1700 of you at this Spring's nine zone meetings, always a pleasant end to the winter. As long as we have our health, there is no place like home in the summertime!

All the best,
Bill Harford, President



OMERS' Chief Economist Robert Lavigne discusses projections for the global economy_ OMERS SC retiree rep Paul Bailey, Lavigne, MROO President Bill Harford, and David Tsubouchi, OMERS Admin Corp Board member



MROO ambassador John Fleck with door prize winner at Ontario Municipal Human Resources conference



Lively chat among colleagues at the May 9 meeting in Thunder Bay

ONTARIO'S RETIREMENT HOME REGULATORY AUTHORITY

SAFEGUARDING ONTARIO'S RETIREMENT HOME RESIDENTS

You may not have heard of the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority (RHRA), but if you or loved ones are considering moving to a Retirement Home, or currently live in one, then you should get to know the RHRA.

The RHRA is an independent organization whose mandate is to inform and protect seniors living in retirement homes or those looking for a home. It was established in 2010 to administer the Retirement Homes Act 2010, and is responsible for licensing, inspecting and regulating retirement homes, as well as keeping a public register on all homes.

Licensed retirement homes must meet the requirements and standards set out in the Act when they are providing accommodation and care. The role of the RHRA is to enforce those requirements and standards, provide information to residents about their rights, and follow up with the home if they are not being met.

Here's what you should know:

- The term "retirement home" can be used by anyone. Always choose a licensed retirement home. To find one check the Public Register at RHRA.ca.
- Always check the inspection reports of the home you are choosing.
- If you or a loved one is a resident, know your rights. They must be posted in the home.
- If you suspect neglect or abuse in a retirement home, or are not sure if a home is licensed, call the RHRA at 1 855 275-7472.

For more information on the RHRA, the Residents' Bill of Rights, or to search the public register, visit RHRA.ca.



Tables of friends at the April meeting in Ottawa



A good start to the day at the 2018 Spring meeting in Ottawa

Wisdom of the ages



Don't worry about avoiding temptation. As you grow older, it will avoid you. - Winston Churchill

Maybe it's true that life begins at fifty, but everything else starts to wear out, fall out, or spread out. - Phyllis Diller

I had a rose named after me and I was very flattered. But I was not pleased to read the description in the catalogue: - 'Not good in a bed, but fine against a wall.' - Eleanor Roosevelt

I don't feel old. I don't feel anything until noon. Then it's time for my nap. - Bob Hope

The secret of a good speech is to have a good beginning and a good ending; and to have the two as close together as possible. - George Burns

Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint. - Mark Twain

I was married by a judge. I should have asked for a jury. - Groucho Marx

WANTED!

Would you like to help others to learn more about MROO and what we do?

In zone 1 (Windsor-Essex, Chatham-Kent, Sarnia-Lambton), we are looking for one person to be the Alternate Zone Director, and three people to be Ambassadors in the Windsor, Sarnia and Chatham areas.

Interested? Please call or e-mail:

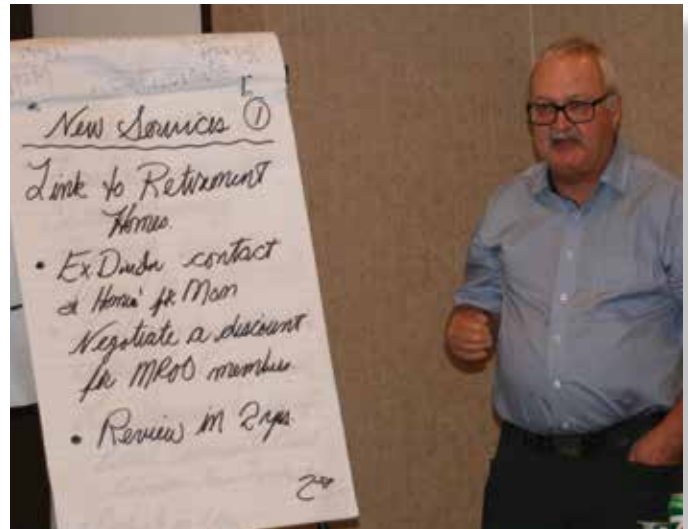
Bruce Peacock, Zone 1 Director

519-325-0684

zone1mroo@gmail.com

or

MROO at 1-800-595-4497, mroo@istar.ca



MROO northwestern Ontario Director Bill Latham, working on the 2019-2021 strategic plan, at the June Board meeting



May 1 Zone 9 meeting in Barrie



At the May 8 meeting in Sudbury



Lunch at the zone meeting in Ajax



Rose Heipel, winner of the ENCON door prize in Chatham, with ENCON's Dani Grant

SURVEY SAYS: RETIREES WORRY ABOUT HEALTH COSTS

A study conducted last spring by MROO focused on the “Realities of Retirement”. 3,227 members provided valuable feedback on topics presently facing today’s retirees. The responses were interesting. In recent generations, retirement was the biggest reward of having spent decades in the workforce. Now, it seems, economic uncertainty has many people concerned about financing their health expenses and stretching their money out over the long term.

When asked to rate their concern regarding fixed or “uncontrollable” costs of retirement living, **pharmaceutical costs** were a moderate concern to 44.22% of respondents, and 29.14% felt it was a **serious concern**. It’s not a secret that hidden health-care costs can be a shock once our employer-sponsored benefits end.

In Ontario, unless you are on social assistance, you will not qualify for the Ontario Drug Benefit Program (ODB) until age 65. Even then, you may have to pay a deductible and co-payments. Lower-income seniors in Ontario who have an annual income under \$19,300; or couples with an annual income under \$32,300 pay up to \$2 per prescription towards the dispensing fee. More affluent residents pay an annual deductible of \$100 under the ODB and up to \$6.11 for each prescription filled.

Another key survey finding came from the question “what aspects of retirement would you advise employees to think about more than they probably have?” The #1 answer was ‘**inevitable declining health**’ over others

such as how to keep learning new things, how to continue feeling useful, having a 24/7 relationship with a spouse/partner. Declining health comes wearing many hats including one for the stress of acquiring new medical conditions and drug costs that OHIP doesn’t pay for.

Perhaps the future will bring changes in the ODB program and prescription drugs will be free for people 65 and over. There are no guarantees in life or in retirement. Fortunately, MROO’s retiree benefit program is available to you now to help you manage your health care expenses.

Retirees in the MROO health care plan can have 100% coverage for ODB drugs. MROO members have the option to save prescription drug costs using our preferred provider, Alliance Pharmacy. When you are a policyholder under the MROO health insurance plan, you can use Alliance Pharmacy to top up your prescription drugs which is offered at 90% coverage and provides **100% coverage** on eligible claims.

For more details, an Alliance Pharmacy Group brochure is included with this newsletter, or use the link <http://www.encon.ca/mroo/>.

In Ontario, unless you are on social assistance, you will not qualify for the Ontario Drug Benefit Program (ODB) until age 65.



Cheerful group at the Kingston meeting



MROO Treasurer Penny Allen, working on the 2019-2021 strategic plan, at the June Board meeting

LYME DISEASE IN ONTARIO

Black-legged ticks

Lyme disease is an infection transmitted, in Ontario, through the bite of an infected black-legged tick. Black-legged ticks (also called deer ticks) live in woodlands, tall grasses and bushes. Not all blacklegged ticks carry Lyme disease. A tick must be infected by the bacteria causing Lyme disease in order to pass it on to you.

In the early 1990s, there was only one known risk area in Ontario, at Long Point Provincial Park. Since then, Ontario has seen an expansion of blacklegged tick populations because of climate change and warmer winter temperatures. They can also spread by traveling on birds and deer. They are most commonly found in areas along the north shores of Lake Erie, Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River, and in the Rainy River area of north-western Ontario. But, while the probability is low, it's possible to encounter an infected tick almost anywhere in Ontario when temperatures are above freezing.

Symptoms

Symptoms of Lyme disease usually begin between three days and one month after being bitten by an infected tick. Prompt antibiotic treatment is usually effective. Early symptoms of Lyme disease may include; fever, headache, muscle and joint pain, fatigue and an expanding red rash.

If left untreated, Lyme disease symptoms could potentially progress to cardiac symptoms such as heart palpitations, arthritic symptoms, extreme fatigue and general weakness, and central and peripheral nervous system disorders. Lyme disease is diagnosed through a combination of symptom presentation, history of exposure to infected ticks and/or validated laboratory test results.

Prevention

The best way to prevent Lyme disease is to avoid tick bites by using insect repellent when outdoors, wearing proper clothing, double-checking yourself and your pets after being in the bush or tall grass, removing ticks from the body as soon as possible after bites, and removing tick habitats from around the home.

In risk habitats, your clothing gives you an important layer of protection. Wear:

- light-coloured clothing so you can spot ticks and remove them
- a long-sleeved shirt or jacket tucked into long pants
- pants tucked into your socks
- socks and closed footwear

After an outdoor activity, you can:

- put your clothes into a dryer on high heat for at least 60 minutes to kill any possible ticks
- take a shower as soon as you can to wash off a tick that may not be attached through a bite

Double-check yourself

When you go to an area where blacklegged ticks live, check – and recheck – yourself by:

- paying close attention to areas such as your scalp, ankles, armpits, groin, navel and behind your ears and knees
- using a mirror to check the back of your body or having someone else check for you

When you've double-checked yourself, don't forget to do the same for children and pets.

continued on page 9 ●●



Attentive table at the meeting in Chatham



Colleagues reminisce at the Zone 1 meeting in Chatham-Kent

LYME DISEASE IN ONTARIO CONTINUED

If you live or work in a wooded area

You can lower chances of contact with blacklegged ticks by:

- keeping grass mowed short
- trimming bushes and tree branches to let in sunlight (ticks avoid hot, dry locations)
- creating a border of gravel or woodchips one metre or wider next to a wooded area or one with tall grasses
- removing leaf litter, brush and weeds at the edge of the lawn and from stone walls and wood piles
- moving playground equipment and sandboxes away from wooded areas (consider placing equipment on a woodchip or mulch foundation)

How to remove a tick

Removing a tick is the same for humans and animals.

- use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to your skin as possible. **Do not use your fingers.**
- Pull the tick straight out, gently but firmly making sure to remove the entire tick (including the head). **Don't squeeze it – avoid crushing the tick's body.**
- After removing the tick, place it in a secure container, such as a screw-top bottle, and give it to your doctor or [HYPERLINK "http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx"](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx) local health unit. If appropriate, they will send it to the Public Health Ontario Laboratory for identification.
- Thoroughly clean the bite site with rubbing alcohol and/or soap and water.



Friends meet again at the zone 6 meeting in Ottawa

- DO NOT:
 - burn the tick
 - paint the tick with nail polish or petroleum jelly
 - This could cause Lyme bacteria to pass through your skin and into your bloodstream.

More Information

Visit the website of Public Health Ontario at www.publichealthontario.ca



Male on the left, female on the right, about 1/8 inch long

RHUBARB

Usually the first garden plant to pop in the spring, rhubarb has a long history. Its root has been a form of medicine in China for millennia. While it may have other properties, its most common medicinal value is its purgative (i.e., laxative) results.

It came to Europe via the "silk road" of Marco Polo and via the steppes of Russia (the name is thought to come from a place in Russia). The first use of rhubarb as a food in Europe - probably from the 1700's - were for pie fillings, using the stalks rather than the roots. It came to North America in the late 1700s.

Rhubarb is a vegetable closely related to its little cousin Sorrel. Its stalks are high in Vitamin C as well as fibre, but its leaves are poisonous due to high concentrations of oxalic acid crystals. Burdock - a common weed in Canada - is often mistaken for rhubarb but is unrelated (although its roots are also edible).

The typical rhubarb season in Canada is May to July, its leaves spreading almost visibly day by day, and its stalks filling pies and even yogurt. Don't add too much sugar. Enjoy.

INTRODUCING THE OMERS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW

COURTESY OF THE OMERS SPONSORS CORPORATION

It's no secret that 2017 was a strong year for OMERS. Despite the recent positive results, however, the Plan remains underfunded and is well off its high-water mark of the late 1990s. Like most major defined benefit (DB) pension plans around the world, OMERS faces a number of realities that will continue to impact the Plan's financial health over the next 20, 50 and even 100 years. Left unchecked, the cost of the Plan is expected to rise steadily over time – or rise substantially under some scenarios. These costs are shouldered by members and employers through their annual contributions.

That is the basis for the *Comprehensive Plan Review*, approved unanimously by the Sponsors Corporation (SC) Board late last year.

While the Review is comprehensive, some things won't change. The OMERS Act requires the OMERS Plan to be a defined benefit (DB) pension plan – that will remain unchanged. It's also important to note that any Plan changes that come out of the Review will have absolutely no impact on benefits that you have already earned as an OMERS member. **As a retiree, any changes to the Plan will have no effect on your pension.**

Despite recent gains, the Plan remains underfunded and vulnerable to longer-term pressures that are beyond our immediate control

- The Plan has not fully recovered from the 2008 financial crisis and is not yet fully funded. It also hasn't built the level of reserve that the Plan has enjoyed in the past and hasn't adopted a discount rate that is in line with similar pension plans. Ten years after the fact, we still have a long-term funding shortfall of \$5.4 billion.
- Contribution levels are at all-time highs. Despite these increased contribution levels, the Plan is on the cusp of paying out more in benefits than it collects in contributions annually, which puts even more pressure on investments to fill the gap.

No decisions have been made

- The Board continues to assess options and will determine which changes, if any, they will focus on over the next several months.

- While no decisions have been made at this point, the SC Board is exploring the possibility of introducing “conditional indexing” at some point in the future. Unlike “de-indexing,” conditional indexing assumes that the Plan will provide **maximum** levels of indexing on an annual basis, subject to the Plan's financial health.
- In this way, conditional indexing provides a temporary safety valve in case the Plan gets into financial trouble. When the Plan is financially healthy, full indexing is provided.

Considering the impact

- If the SC Board elects to adopt conditional indexing, the change will **have absolutely no impact on current retirees**. They would continue to be guaranteed full indexing .
- **In no case would the pensions of even future retirees be reduced from one year to the next.** They may just increase at a slower rate during difficult times.

There will be consultation

- Part of the Board's consideration will include consultation with members, employers, unions and sponsors. The Board is expected to vote in November on which changes, if any, will be made.
- The Board will also decide the timeline for any changes. There will be no changes implemented in 2018 – and we don't expect to see changes before 2021.

Over the next few months, the SC will be engaging with members, unions, employers, sponsors and stakeholders in a variety of ways. Before anything is finalized, the SC will present a series of webcasts starting in August, and focus groups this fall, to gauge member response to the potential Plan design changes. The goal is to provide regular updates on the *Comprehensive Plan Review* and to gather valuable feedback.

You can expect to hear more about the *Comprehensive Plan Review* in the weeks ahead, including potential options. For now, please visit the Sponsors Corporation website (www.omerssc.com) for additional information and all the latest updates.

MAKING WITHDRAWALS FROM YOUR RRIF

COURTESY OF THE ONTARIO SECURITIES COMMISSION

Retirement is an important milestone for Ontarians. Over the years, many of you have saved and invested money in the hopes of having the financial resources to support the retirement lifestyle you want.

Eventually, you will have to convert your Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) into a Registered Retirement Income Fund (RRIF). Two key decisions you have to make with a RRIF are how much money to take out and when. While there is a minimum amount you have to take out each year, there is no maximum amount. All withdrawals are fully taxable.

Withdrawing the minimum amount

You must withdraw money from your RRIF beginning in the year after you open it. The federal government sets the minimum amount you must take out of your RRIF every year. It's based on a percentage of the value of your RRIF.

Here's how it works:

- The minimum amount increases as you get older.
- If your spouse is younger than you, you can use their age to calculate your minimum amount. The lower the age, the lower the minimum amount and the less income tax you'll pay on the withdrawals. This is a good strategy if you want to leave your money in your RRIF for as long as possible.
- You can choose to make regular monthly, quarterly, semi-annual or annual withdrawals.
- All withdrawals are fully taxable.



The retiree panel reflects on their experience of retirement, at the MROO retirement planning seminar in Georgina

Age on January 1	Minimum amount (as of January 1, 2015)*
70 and under	Calculated as $1/(90 - \text{age})$ For example, at age 65: $1/(90 - 65) = 4.00\%$
71	5.28%
72	5.40%
73	5.53%
74	5.67%
75	5.82%
76	5.98%
77	6.17%
78	6.36%
79	6.58%
80	6.82%
81	7.08%
82	7.38%

Age on January 1	Minimum amount (as of January 1, 2015)*
83	7.71%
84	8.08%
85	8.51%
86	8.99%
87	9.55%
88	10.21%
89	10.99%
90	11.92%
91	13.06%
92	14.49%
93	16.34%
94	18.79%
95+	20.00%

*The minimum withdrawal amount is based on the value of your RRIF on December 31 of the previous year.

continued on page 12 ●●

MAKING WITHDRAWALS FROM YOUR RRIF CONTINUED

If you take out more than the minimum amount

You can take out as much as you need every year from your RRIF, but there are tax considerations.

Here's how it works:

- There is no maximum withdrawal limit.
- All withdrawals are fully taxable.
- If you take out more than the minimum amount, you'll also pay withholding tax on the excess amount. Your financial institution will hold back an amount, based on the withholding tax rates, and pay it directly to the government on your behalf.



What a lunch at the May 9 2018 Zone 8 meeting in Thunder Bay!

Amount in excess of the minimum amount	Withholding tax rate (in Ontario)
Up to \$5,000	10%
Between \$5,000 and \$15,000	20%
More than \$15,000	30%

You can learn more about retirement finances and managing your investments by visiting GetSmarterAboutMoney.ca, the Ontario Securities Commission's award-winning investor education website.



MROO 2018-19 executive committee; from left, Dianne Hern, Bill Harford, Penny Allen, Giulio Di Bacco, Don MacLeod



The MROO team behind the very successful May 1 meeting in Barrie

OMERS IS OUT TO INFORM

35 years ago, representatives of OMERS (like many company pension plans to this day) were not in the habit of travelling the province to keep retirees up to date about their pension plan. In fact, way back then, it was MROO that organized meetings in places like Chatham, North Bay, Port Dover, and Cornwall, and invited OMERS staff out to talk to retirees.

Not now! The talented speakers from OMERS' Training and Education Bureau organize and speak to retirees at dozens of information sessions per year in places large and small throughout Ontario. Example: this summer, they will be in Timmins, Kapuskasing, Collingwood, Cobourg, Burlington, Vaughan, Mississauga, Owen Sound, Peterborough and Port Perry.

To find out when and where OMERS info sessions will be held, and to register to attend, see: <https://www.omers.com/Members/Learning-About-My-Pension/Information-Sessions>

The OMERS website updates the schedule quarterly, so check often for one near you.

COST OF LONG-TERM CARE A RETIREMENT PLANNING BLIND SPOT: HOOPP REPORT

BY JOHN DEVINE

New research by the Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan (HOOPP) confirms that the costs of long-term care and other health-related expenses are not anticipated by many Canadians. The report, The Cost of Long-Term Care: Canada's Retirement Savings Blind Spot, reveals that nearly 75 per cent of Canadians have "made no provision for long-term care costs in their retirement planning."

Those costs include nursing-home care, assisted living in seniors' residences, home care, and other related needs.

"As Canadians live longer than ever, policymakers must look closely at how they're going to deal with a population that is unprepared to handle the high costs of health-related expenses in retirement," states the report. A lack of adequate income to provide for such services "will be devastating for single Canadians, particularly

women, who are more likely to require this type of care." Increased longevity stands to make the problem all the more serious.

Costs related to long-term care for seniors unable to afford it have serious implications, states the report, including a "worsening of chronic conditions and higher healthcare costs as the burden on the publicly funded system increases." It offers three key recommendations: Account for all of the out-of-pocket healthcare costs; Ensure adequate income replacement; Consider a national action plan.

"Canada needs to determine a plan of action that would address the growing needs of the most vulnerable seniors," states the report.

WHY BOOK YOUR TRAVEL WITH A TRAVEL PROFESSIONAL?

COURTESY OF MERIT TRAVEL, PREFERRED TRAVEL PARTNER OF MROO. [HTTPS://MERITTRAVEL.COM/](https://merittravel.com/)

Expertise and Genuine Care

Working with a travel expert means working with someone who has a passion for travel. They have very likely been to wherever it is you want to go!

Personal Service

You get to talk to a real person instead of a computer! A travel professional gets to know you – your interests, priorities, and style of travel – and can take away the stress of spending hours online sifting through options to find one that's right for you.

Peace of Mind

A real person is keeping tabs on you from the start of your booking through to the time you land back home. They are there to help during your trip with everything from restaurant recommendations to missing a connecting flight.

Benefits & Special Offers

When you work with a travel expert you are guaranteed to find out about the best options for you. This might be in the form of best value for money or the ability to customise your travel to exactly what you want. You don't have to worry about the quality or rating of a hotel; in fact, you may be offered exclusive privileges, bonus amenities or upgrades.



Zone 2 meeting in London - members bring new members

ROBOCALL SCAMS

Have you been getting calls from an automated message in Mandarin? Or a call telling you that you've just won a cruise? You're not alone. The CRTC registers 588 new numbers a day to their do-not-call registry from frustrated Canadians hoping to get off those robocall lists. While there are legitimate uses of robocalling like notifications from your pharmacy or an update from a political candidate, many of these scams don't follow the do-not-call list.

There are a few techniques you can use to help you protect yourself and avoid these calls in the future.

- First, don't talk to the robot; your voice and the numbers you press may be informing the robocaller that you are a person. Just hang up. There have even been documented cases of these messages recording voice information to impersonate you for identity fraud.
- Second, Register your number on the DNCL for Canada (<https://www.innate-dncl.gc.ca/en>). This will automate the process of blocking you from many telemarketing communications. You can use the site to register fraudulent phone calls as well.
- Third, if you are on your mobile, you can typically block the caller by looking at the details of the number and scrolling to the bottom to add to your own blocked callers list.

If you don't speak Mandarin and wonder what those

calls are about, the message is typically threatening call recipients to submit personal details, claiming that the recipient is under investigation for a crime.

(see also <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/chinese-embassy-phone-scam-1.4234983>)

Steel Yourself, Canada

As talk swirls about US tariffs on steel from Canada, and Canadian tariffs on steel from the USA, here are some facts (from 2016)...

- In 2016, over 10 million tonnes of steel, worth over \$11.8 billion, was traded between our two countries, with Canada shipping \$5.87 billion to the USA (5.4M tonnes), and the USA shipping \$5.96 billion (4.7M tonnes) to Canada.
- Canada is the #1 destination of U.S. steel exports, representing over 50% of U.S. exports. The USA is the #1 destination of Canadian steel exports, representing over 85% of Canadian exports.
- The states sending most steel to Canada: Ohio (\$1.04B worth), Pennsylvania (\$771 M worth), Michigan (\$731 M), Indiana (\$496M)
- Provinces sending most steel to the USA: Ontario (\$4.8B), Quebec (\$611M)
- Steel industry jobs in Canada: 22,000 direct, over 70,000 indirect (suppliers, processors, truckers, etc.)



Members and new members at the zone 5 meeting in Kingston

THE SOCIAL VALUE OF OMERS

OMERS retirees are positive contributors to their communities because of the stability and predictability that comes from the OMERS defined benefit pension plan, according to a new study.

The study, conducted by Deloitte on behalf of OMERS, examined the behaviour of OMERS retirees and near retirees and compared it against a similar group without a defined benefit pension plan (and statistically removing any impact from age or gender differences).

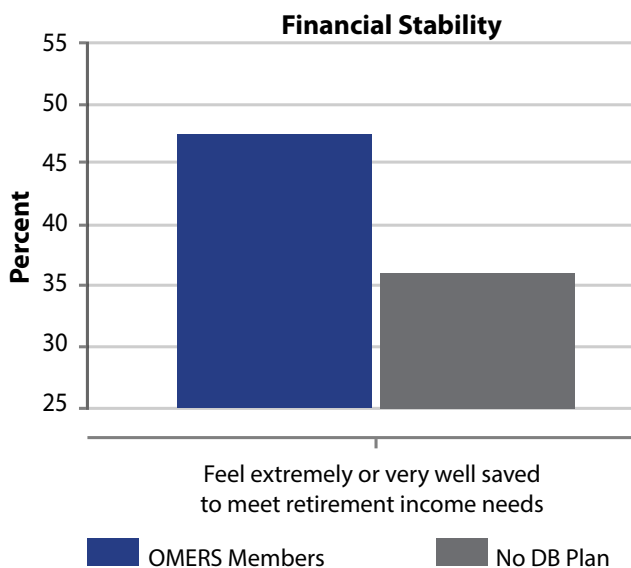
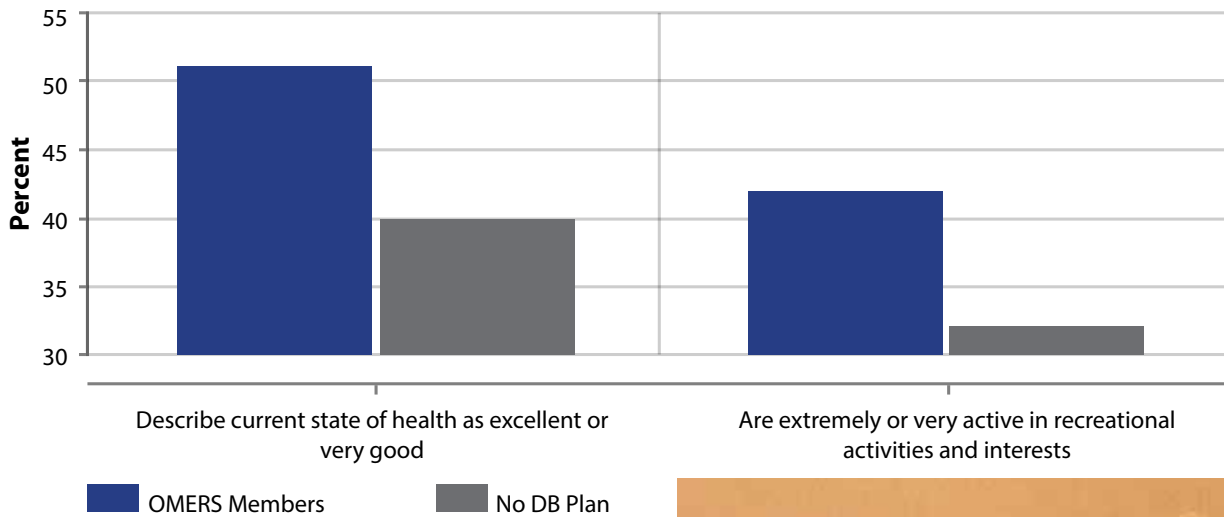
The study found:

- OMERS members are more likely to be healthier overall than people without a defined benefit pension plan;

- OMERS members are more likely to be extremely or very active than people without a defined benefit pension plan;
- OMERS members volunteer more in their communities and donate more to charity;
- OMERS members are more likely to own their own homes; and
- OMERS members are more likely to feel prepared for an unexpected expense of \$10,000.

The study was conducted in the fall of 2017, and was based on a survey with 447 OMERS retirees and near-retirees and 500 people without a defined benefit pension plan.

Management of Health



Roberta Hague, OMERS Senior Vice-President for Communication and Public Affairs, with MROO President Bill Harford, speaking at the MROO Board meeting

Municipal Retirees
Organization Ontario
4094 Tomken Road
Mississauga, Ontario
L4W 1J5

Toll-Free: 1-800-595-4497
Fax: (905) 602-6710
Email: mroo@istar.ca
Website: www.mroo.org

Office Hours: Tuesday,
9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Publications Mail Registration
Number: 40041589

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/mroontario>



• Protecting the pensions and enhancing the quality of life for all OMERS pensioners.

THE VALUE OF MROO MEMBERSHIP

You weigh in on MROO's services

More than 2,400 of you took the time to respond to the 2018 MROO Services Survey, either online or on paper at the recent MROO Zone Meetings. We appreciate your insights; they will help the Board as it develops the next three-year strategic plan. Here are highlights of what you had to say.

Staying informed

When it comes to receiving information from MROO, 78% indicated that they like to receive email communication. The fact that the MROO membership is active online was reflected by the method chosen to complete the survey: over 1700 people filled it out online. Nevertheless, half of you (51%) also like to receive printed material. The newsletter is especially well-received, with 94% of respondents saying that they find it useful/interesting or very useful/very interesting. The MROO website (79%), email bulletins (76%) and zone meetings (76%) are also popular ways of staying in-the-know.

Current services

Your evaluation of MROO's current offers was a little more surprising. The vast majority of you were well-informed and positive about the MROO health/dental insurance and travel insurance coverage (and 72% of found it to be a useful/very useful service) through ENCON, as well as home and auto insurance through the Mitchell & Abbott Group, pharma discounts, travel services, and scholarships.

About some services, however, we clearly need to raise awareness. The discount inventory on the MROO website, local coffee and muffin speaker sessions, optical service discounts, cell phone discounts, and YourNurse services all came as news to a quarter of survey respondents.

Future services

The survey asked about services you would like to see added to the MROO services roster. There was no clear leader amongst the options, but we know that many of you would be interested in:

- discounts on club memberships;
- opportunities for charitable work, special-interest groups, and education sessions on topics of interest to retirees, including computer/social media training;
- access to in-home caregiver support, legal services and retirement residence operators.

Final word

One comment that was very gratifying for the Board is the fact that 88% of respondents would recommend MROO membership to an eligible friend. That suggests we must be doing something right! Nevertheless, we won't rest on our laurels and will continue to make MROO bigger and better. Thank you again for responding to the 2018 MROO Services Survey.