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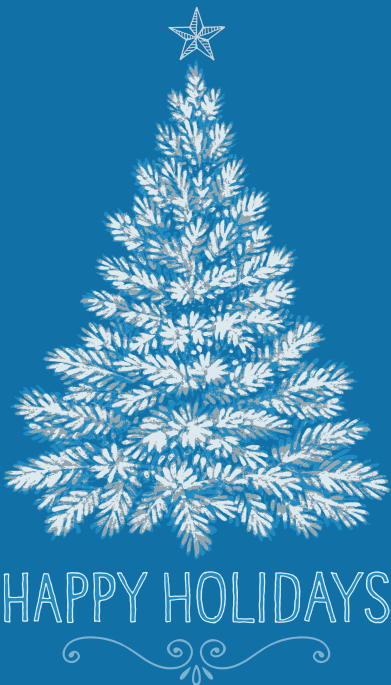


YOUR

NEWSLETTER

FALL / WINTER 2021

KEEPING
OUR
MEMBERS
INFORMED



BC Government
Retired Employees
Association

www.bcgrea.ca



FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

We're pleased to present you with your Fall/Winter edition of **The Pen**. This issue contains fewer topics as the Communications Committee was only recently formed.

To reach as many members as possible, The Pen is distributed via email and by Canada Post (to those who we have no record of a current email address).

This edition's topics include:

- The president's message.
- AGM election results and links to keynote address by Isobel Mackenzie.
- Upcoming coverage changes in your extended Health Plan related to prescriptions.
- Plans for a province-wide membership survey.
- BCGREA Communications Plan moving forward.
- In memoriam list of our fellow members.

WELCOME



If you're receiving [The Pen](#) through Canada Post, some information may be stale dated when it arrives. Much of the related information is on the internet and not able to be included in this mailing.

Large volume mailings are complicated, time consuming, and expensive. Sending all the information in a timely manner better serves our membership. This is only accomplished if we can reach everyone electronically via email.

For those without an email, please consider creating one. Have your contact (whether it be a partner, friend, caregiver, or family member) send us an email message to (info@bcgre.ca) with your name and email address. We'll do the rest. Our contact information is as follows:

Central Office: BCGREA
PO Box 23114, Cook Street PO
Victoria, BC V8V 4Z8
250-751-8814

TELL US ABOUT YOU

For the Spring 2022 edition of [The Pen](#), we want to showcase stories of you or your BCGREA branch.

- Do you, or a branch member, have a unique hobby? For example, blacksmithing, model railroading, geocaching, or an activity that they devote countless hours for enjoyment or helping others.
- Does your community host an unusual event annually? Like, snow golf or a rib fest.
- Tell us how people in your community overcame or helped others during the extreme events of this year? Be it flooding to wildfires, the heat dome, to the ongoing health pandemic.
- If a branch member travelled recently, do they have an interesting experience to share with the membership?

Send your story in a Word document or typed in the body of your email message to: thepen@bcgre.ca. Please include a picture or two in a jpeg format. We'll do our best to place it in the next edition.

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BCGREA – PROVINCIAL OFFICE

Contact: Josie Byington
bcgre@telus.net

PO Box 23114, Cook Street PO
Victoria, BC V8V 4Z8
Tel 250-751-8814
E-mail: info@bcgre.ca

EDITORIAL TEAM

Patrick Harkness
Charles La Vertu
Dan Harlow
Tammy Welch

Interested in submitting an article or advertisement?
For submission or advertising guidelines, contact us:
thepen@bcgre.ca

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The past 20 months has emphasized that several issues directly affect the BCGREA. Our membership has suffered a decline as we have been experiencing limited uptake from potential new members for some time.



Brian Green

Several branches are struggling with succession planning and the current inability to connect socially and in-person is one factor. None of these and other issues are unique to us. They befuddle almost all volunteer-based organizations.

As we move into 2022, your executive team is committed to address the fundamental questions related to what the role of the BCGREA should be and how best to remain viable and relevant.

This newsletter outlines several initiatives. More will follow. I'm confident our leadership team, both provincially and in our branches, is fully committed to confronting these and other issues while building a meaningful pathway forward.

Over the past three years, we have worked on a number of those issues to meet our goal of building a solid foundation for the BCGREA by:

- Hiring an ongoing contract for administrative services.
- Revamping our website.
- Improving our electronic communications.
- Establishing a current membership database.
- Consulting regularly with Pension Corporation, other public sector retiree associations, and seniors' advocacy groups.
- Increasing the range and scope of available discounts.

The new executive wants to acknowledge our retiring elected officers who deserve kudos, and everyone's thanks, for their dedication and work in supporting our association during their tenure.

As well, I invite your comments and suggestions about BCGREA as we move forward. My email is president@bcgre.ca.

Finally, and on behalf of the provincial executive, our wish is for a safe and enjoyable holiday season. May 2022 be a year of renewal, health, and serenity for all of us.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Brian Green".

A new BCGREA executive was elected along with a first-time election for our Pension Plan Trustee at the 2021 AGM.

Your new Provincial Executive members are:

- **Brian Green,** - President
- **Vincent Sherry,** - 1st Vice President
- **Patrick Harkness,** - 2nd Vice President
- **Johanna Morrow,** - Trustee, BC Public Service Pension Board of Trustees

Executive member biographies are available online at:

<https://bcgre.ca/provincial-executive>

The AGM's keynote speaker **Isobel Mackenzie,** Seniors Advocate for the Province of BC. Her presentation on Seniors Issues and Priorities in British Columbia



Isobel Mackenzie

provided an interesting and sometimes surprising insight into many facets of seniors' well-being now and into the future. You will find Isobel's presentation through the video link,

<https://bcgre.ca/agm-archive>

Isobel has graciously provided us with her presentation slides. Simply click the following link below:

https://bcgre.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/AGM2021_SnrsAdvocate_Presentation_20Oct2021.pdf

Finally, the October 20, 2021 AGM minutes are located at:

<https://bcgre.ca/agm-archive>

Retiring Executive

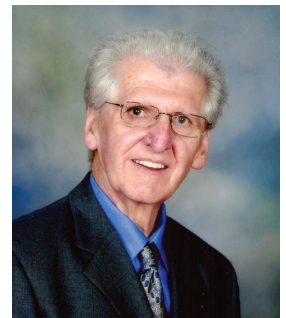
We're grateful for all the hard work of our retiring executive members:



Ken Pendergast
(President),
now Past President



Carrie Mulcahy
(2nd Vice-President)



Lawrence Johnson
(Trustee, BC Public Service Pension Board of Trustees)

HEALTH BENEFITS

Questions about your health benefits changes? We've got answers

Your retirement group health benefits are changing on January 1, 2022. Learn what's top of mind for members.

Changes to the Public Service Pension Plan's retirement group health benefits may affect you. To help you understand some of the important changes starting on January 1, 2022, we've answered below the most common questions the Public Service Pension Board of Trustees has heard.

Why is the board making changes?

The board is taking action to ensure your health coverage is sustainable. The board strives to ensure changes are fair for current and future generations.

What's changing?

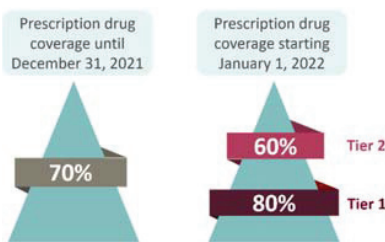
Starting on January 1, 2022, there will be a new tiered formulary for the drug plan based on BC PharmaCare coverage. This will improve coverage for most prescription drugs.

Until December 31, 2021, prescription drugs are reimbursed by the group benefits program at 70 per cent.

Under the new formulary, drugs will be grouped into two levels of reimbursement:

- Tier 1: drugs that are covered by BC PharmaCare; reimbursement will increase to 80 per cent from 70 per cent.
- Tier 2: drugs that are not covered by BC PharmaCare; reimbursement will decrease to 60 per cent from 70 per cent.

A 12-month grace period will be provided to those retired members taking a tier 2 drug for a chronic condition. For these members, reimbursement remains at 70 per cent during this period. The new reimbursement for the tier 2 drug will take effect January 1, 2023. If you are directly affected by these changes, see the letter that Green Shield Canada (GSC) sent to you between October and January outlining next steps and options.



What remains the same?

- The lifetime maximum limit for extended health care coverage is \$250,000 per person.
- For members who pay premiums, rates are adjusted annually. The pension plan subsidizes the cost of monthly premiums for extended health care based on your years of pensionable service. The subsidy is not guaranteed. The plan does not subsidize the cost of monthly premiums for your spouse and dependants. The plan also does not subsidize the cost of the dental program's monthly premiums.

Who pays what amount when it comes to the deductibles?

PharmaCare has its own deductible and bases each individual's annual deductible on net family income. The PharmaCare deductible is **paid by your benefits program through GSC.**

Your benefits program has an annual deductible of \$250, which is not related to the PharmaCare deductible. The \$250 deductible is the out-of-pocket amount you must pay in each calendar year before the plan starts paying for extended health benefits.

Is there a list available to check if a drug is on the PharmaCare formulary?

Use PharmaCare's formulary search tool at <https://pharmacareformularysearch.gov.bc.ca/faces/Search.xhtml> The search tool will tell you which drugs are covered by PharmaCare. Please note the tool will not display whether your drug is tier 1 or tier 2

Learn more

You can learn more about the changes by visiting the plan's website at <https://pspp.pensionsbc.ca> There you can review the information available and watch a webinar recording.

Sadly, listed below are BCGREA members reported to Central Support who passed away between 1 January and 21 November 2021. (These individuals were not noted in the Spring 2021 issue of The Pen).

Branch 100

Leitner Janet E
Schmid Connie P

Branch 200

Butler Michael F
James Carol P
Lister Michael Carl William
Meredith Anne E
Walker Victor

Branch 300

Brochu A (Ann) Florence
Coates John Douglas
Eidsness Eileen M
Gredzuk Alex
Oddie Barbara
Rahal Sandra J

Branch 400

Uphill William T
Wickens (Wayne) Edwin Alfred

Branch 500

Ames Ronald G
Cartwright John William
Collins Bertha M
Cordonier Margaret E
Dueck Sarah
Halliday Donald V
Lewis Fredrick James
McDonell Viola
Moore Tom Owen
Powell Maureen P
Steele Erma
Thalheimer Lawrence
Toombs Russ D
Vanderwolf John Henry

Branch 600

Fuller Norah E
Jordan Robert (Bob) E
MacKenzie Ian E

McLean Christina Ann
Spalding Eric L
Stewart-Walker Carol A
Wallace Doreen E
Willcox Gerard Michael

Branch 700

Mackie Lorraine

Branch 800

Barber Gerald (Gerry) William
Cambrey James (Jim) Alfred
Friesen Vivian Ruth
Herrington Constance Winifred
Isenor Donald Muir
Lawler Brian Richard
Lloyd Theresa Clementine
Purchase Valerie M
Rawluk Gary Bruce
Rogers Joan Ellen Sandra
Stevenson Lillian M
Wardle Marie Antoinette
Pauline (Paula)
Williams June Irene

Branch 900

Docherty Arthur Miller
Gibson John Hugh
Shalman Denis C
Van Blerk Richard C

Branch 1000

Bates David Paul
Dash Ron K.
Wick Barton K.

Branch 1100

Cashmore Katherine
Cornick Margaret E
Layton John D
Leech Dennis N
Ramsay Gertrude M
Suttie Helen J

Branch 1200

Alexander (Margaret Eileen) Peggy
Ananichuk Agnes J
Chan Norma Helena
Delikatny Frank P
Duffy Donald Armitage
Fulton Andrea Marie
Gerdes Elsie L
Harper George W
Hawkes (formerly Dhalian) Mukhtar K (Mary)
Ivatts Cecilia Marie
Johnson Ronald G
Judd Philip Henry
Lee Stephen W.
London Doris Elsie
Marczyk Connie L.
McAdams Les P
Morison Neil J (James)
Pain Shirley R
Pollard Christopher Lessey
Renton Doreen Janet
Sherring Eileen
Smylie Conrad
Turner Derek A
Ustik Adam
Waelti Hans
Wood Diane Edith G

Branch 1500

Burke Lorne Patrick
Cullen Ken I.
McKenna Stella
Reed George Aubrey
Wilson Peter H

Branch 1600

Brittons Betty T
Ferris Arline
Smith Bev A

Branch 2000

Bitterlich Ulf
Hamilton Ronald A.
Richardson James

Branch 2100

Gill Charan Pal Singh
Nootebos Jacobus
(Jack) Gradus
Sprangers Wilhemus
(William) J.M

Branch 2400

Stepputat Barbara E
(Betty)

Branch 2500

Eastaugh John G. M.
Hives Stephen John
James Shirley J.
Joslin Helen M
Reid Ronald D
Todd Roderick A D

Branch 5000

Tinney Peggy



Member Survey

A survey will soon be arriving in your inbox or by Canada Post (if we don't have an email address for you).

Your Recruitment and Retention Committee recommended that BCGREA poll its members to find out what the members want from the association. They also want input on your communication preferences and BCGREA organizational structure moving forward.

A subcommittee is working with **Dr. Richard Brown of CDR Business Diagnostics** to design the survey as this edition of *The Pen* goes to press.

It is important to ask appropriate questions to guide the BCGREA's future direction. All replies will be anonymous and confidential.

To encourage participation in the survey, all members who respond to the survey will have their name entered into a prize draw. One member who returns the electronic survey and a second member who returns the survey through Canada Post will each win \$250 and a \$500 Grand Prize will be drawn from the list of all the people who responded.

Watch for this survey and fill it out and return it so your voice is heard and so you have a chance to win \$500.



HAPPY HOLIDAYS



AN APOLOGY

The Spring 2021 edition of *The Pen* contained a significant error on page 11 under Branch 500 of "In Memoriam". Ishbel M. Elliot was included in this listing. We're happy to report that Ishbel is very much alive and living with her daughter Katrina in Langley.



The entry was a result of a clerical error and purely unintentional. We have modified our administrative procedures to ensure that this type of error doesn't happen again. The BCGREA apologizes for any concern or stress that resulted from this mistake. We recognize that this notice caused upheaval to Ishbel's family and friends. We are truly sorry for this.

Al Barclay
BCGREA Provincial Membership Secretary

Keep In Touch

To ensure you have access to all your membership benefits, please advise us of any changes to your email and mailing address. Many issues of **The Pen** are returned to us after each mailing.

If you don't have an email, please consider creating one so you're promptly notified of BCGREA news concerning important topics such as our Public Service Pension Plan and pensioner benefits. Let's stay in touch!

Josie Byington, Provincial Office

How to Contact BCGREA

Website - Fill in the online form, by visiting:
<https://bcgre.ca/contact/>

Email
bcgre@telus.net

Phone
250-751-8814

And...

On behalf of your communications committee, namely,

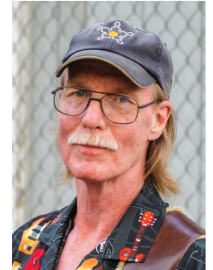
Patrick Harkness
Chilliwack



Charles La Vertu
Victoria



Dan Harlow
Grand Forks



Tammy Welch
Victoria



We wish you a "Happy New Year"

B.C. Government Retired
Employees Association
PO Box 23114, Cook Street PO
Victoria, BC V8V 4Z8

