**National Pensioners Federation**

June 2020

**The Ontario Federation of Union Retirees Report**

The Ontario Federation of Union Retirees (OFUR), with funds provided by the Ontario Seniors Grant Program, held its first Seniors Fire Safety Symposium for senior leaders on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 in Hamilton, ON. This event brought together Hamilton seniors to network and connect with one another and enhance social participation, while focusing on key issues of seniors' wellness and safety for individuals and within their communities. Over 70 individuals representing residential settings, long-term care, retirement homes and local senior organizations participated in this well-received event.

Ontario long-term care facilities and private retirement homes are required by law to have safety plans in place for residents, including emergency planning in case of fire and other risks. As of January 1, 2019, all Ontario retirement and long-term care facilities are required to have automatic sprinkler systems in place. Despite this, there still seems to be a lack of awareness about fire safety in all seniors' dwellings and/or adequate systems and protocols to create safe living environments for older adults. We believe that fire safety in all types of seniors' dwellings is an issue that is often overlooked and one that should be more prioritized. We know from the heartbreaking stories we have seen in the news how important it is to increase awareness about fire safety and emergency preparedness in order to not only prevent but to minimize the devastating effects that can be caused by fires.

This fire safety symposium highlighted what to do in the event of a fire in your house, apartment buildings or retirement community, learn how to prevent fires, how to prepare for an emergency and how to become a Senior Fire Safety Ambassador for your peers.

OFUR is grateful for the help and support of the Hamilton Fire Department under Chief Dave Cunliffe for his opening remarks and for providing his staff and resources for workshops on Fire Prevention and Fire Safety, Claudio Mostacci, Assistant Chief Fire Prevention Officer, Hamilton Fire Department and Emergency Management and Emergency Preparedness, Connie Verhaeghe, Senior Emergency Management Coordinator, Hamilton Fire Department. OFUR also thanks Carla MacDonald, Assistant Deputy Chief, Hamilton Fire Department and Steve McArthur, Fire Safety Officer, Hamilton Fire Department for their initial interest and support of the idea and concept for OFUR's 1st Seniors Fire Safety Symposium.

The Ontario Federation of Union Retirees (OFUR) works on behalf of retired union members in the province, as well as for the welfare of all retirees. We educate and advocate for improvements to seniors' safety and wellbeing on issues of health care, long-term care, senior's housing, pension security and pharmacare. OFUR believes in improving aging experiences for Ontarians by increasing knowledge and capacity through the skills, expertise and experience of retirees.

Suzanne Clancy, OFUR President