



## Ontario’s new action plan for seniors ‘reflects priorities of our members,’ says RTO/ERO president

*New plan supports RTO/ERO political advocacy priorities*

(Nov. 7, 2017) The new Ontario action plan for seniors connects to many of the priorities of the 76,000+ members of the Retired Teachers of Ontario/Les enseignantes et enseignants retraités de l’Ontario.

“Ontario’s new Action Plan for Seniors reflects the way we live today,” says Martha Foster, president of RTO/ERO. “Whether we’re in our 50s or centenarians, RTO/ERO members and other seniors want to live healthy, active lives full of meaningful connections. With a focus on ‘aging in place,’ breaking down ageist stereotypes and valuing the contributions seniors continue to make, this action plan is designed to meet our needs as individuals and as a growing segment of our communities.”

The new action plan reflects several of the top political advocacy priorities that RTO/ERO unveiled recently. The advocacy campaign – *Vibrant Voices* – highlights areas of concern and interest to RTO/ERO members that will be highlighted in upcoming provincial, national and municipal elections during the next two years.

<b>RTO/ERO <i>Vibrant Voices</i> political advocacy priority</b>	<b>Connection to <i>Ontario Action Plan for Seniors</i></b>
<i>Age-friendly communities</i> – An age-friendly community optimizes opportunities for health, participation and security, to enhance quality of life as people get older	<i>Supporting All Seniors</i> – expanded Age-Friendly Community grant program
<i>Support for Bill 33 amendments</i> mandating at least four hours a day of nursing and personal support services per resident	<i>Senior Requiring Intensive Supports</i> – investments to build new long-term care beds and increase LTC home staffing
<i>Elder Abuse</i> – Any situation that limits or controls the rights and freedoms of an older adult is a form of elder abuse	<i>Supporting All Seniors</i> – strengthened prevention of and response to elder abuse
<i>Geriatric Training</i> – A key factor that supports healthy aging is the availability of appropriate health, social and community care providers, with the knowledge needed to care for older Canadians	<i>Seniors Requiring Enhanced Supports</i> – increasing access to specialized care in geriatrics

"RTO/ERO aims to improve the lives of our members and all seniors," says Jim Grieve, executive director of RTO/ERO. "We aim to create greater awareness about healthy aging during the *awesome years*, to break down barriers and stereotypes and to mobilize our volunteers on issues of importance to them."

RTO/ERO also operates a charitable foundation, whose mission aligns well with the new action plan for seniors. The Foundation is one of only a few in Canada focused on supporting research and initiatives that expand knowledge of and action on issues unique to aging Canadians. The RTO/ERO Foundation was formed in 2011 and has invested more than \$2.8 million in projects that enhance quality of life for aging adults. The Foundation targets its funding support toward:

- Aging-related research and training
- Community-based programs that address isolation among older adults

As its flagship initiative, the Foundation established the RTO/ERO Chair in Geriatric Medicine at the University of Toronto in 2014. The Foundation continues to raise funds for innovative approaches to addressing specific needs of aging Canadians. Grantees are considered based on specific granting criteria and a rigorous peer-review process.

"RTO/ERO is a 'naturally occurring' community of seniors from the broader education community, and nothing is more important to us than making sure our members have the information and supports we need to safeguard our healthy active lifestyles in retirement," says Foster. "We will continue to collaborate with the Ministry of Seniors Affairs to provide information and support, personalized to meet our members' needs and interests."

**About RTO/ERO** – [www.rto-ero.org](http://www.rto-ero.org)

RTO/ERO is a bilingual trusted voice on healthy, active living in the retirement journey for the broader education community – including early years, school boards, post-secondary and private schools. RTO/ERO promotes a wide range of world-class programs, social networks and assistance throughout retirement. Most of RTO/ERO's 76,000 members reside in Ontario, but members live across Canada. The organization has 46 districts in Ontario and two in British Columbia. RTO/ERO has the largest voluntary group insurance plan, owned and directed by members, for the education sector in Canada – with more than 96,000 participants. For more information about the Vibrant Voices campaign and a list of RTO/ERO's seven advocacy issues, go to [bit.ly/VibrantVoices](http://bit.ly/VibrantVoices).

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