

YOUR PENSION MATTERS

4/06/20

SPECIAL EDITION

by: Chief Paul O'Connell
Board Chairperson
4/06/20

As we travel together on this uncharted journey here are some thoughts to share with you:

The market continues its volatile ride up and down.....mostly down. Unemployment will be one of the biggest tests our nation will face going forward; the numbers are staggering! As we stated before, this pandemic will be a test of nerves and endurance; both personally and professionally for all of us.

From a *professional perspective*, those of us on the front lines as first responders face the greatest risks. For that we share the appreciations of a grateful nation. No doubt the stress and anxiety we feel is intense as we answer the many calls for service on a daily basis.

From a *personal perspective*, our respective 401K and 457 accounts are taking a beating right now. No doubt the stress and anxiety we feel is intense as we face an uncertain economic future.

*Here is what we know.....*your monthly pension check is safe and secure. Your Board of Trustees and staff are working together to ensure continuity and stability. Our March meeting was canceled and our Annual Symposium was placed on hold for a future date TBD.

*Here is what we do NOT know.....*how long this test of endurance will last and how deep this economic hole will be as we face an uncertain economic future. However, as stated in our last *Special Edition*, our Nation has faced far greater challenges in the past and history is on our side!

Through this "C-19 pandemic" our country and our community will remain strong and resilient, and together we will persevere through these challenging times. I believe in the **Power of Perseverance!** Our Country has seen much bigger challenges and endured. We wish you good health and safety along the way, and should you need our assistance do not hesitate to call upon us.

In the meantime, here is the best nutshell description (Dr. Michael Ryan, W.H.O.) of the virus I have read and I share this with you.....

WHAT MAKES CORONA VIRUS SO DANGEROUS?

Feeling confused as to why Coronavirus is a bigger deal than Seasonal flu?

It has to do with RNA sequencing ... i.e. "genetics."

Seasonal flu is an "all human virus". The DNA/RNA chains that make up the virus are recognized by the human immune system. This means that your body has some immunity to it before it comes around each year. You get immunity two ways; through exposure to a virus or by getting a flu shot.

Novel viruses come from animals ... the **W.H.O.** tracks novel viruses in animals, (sometimes for years watching for

mutations). Usually, these viruses only transfer from animal to animal (pigs in the case of H1N1 and birds in the case of the Spanish Flu of 1918). But once one of these animal viruses mutates and starts to transfer from animals to humans, then it's a problem. Why? Because we have no natural or acquired immunity ... the RNA sequencing of the genes inside the virus isn't human and the human immune system doesn't recognize it, so we can't fight it off.

Now ... sometimes the mutation only allows transfer from animal to human. For years it's the only transmission -- from an infected animal to a human -- before it finally mutates so that it can now transfer human to human. Once that happens we have a new contagion phase. And depending on the fashion of this new mutation, that's what decides how contagious or how deadly it will be. H1N1 was deadly but it did not mutate in a way that was as deadly as the Spanish Flu. Its RNA was slower to mutate and it attacked its host differently, too. Now fast forward

Here comes this Coronavirus ... it existed in animals only for nobody knows how long. But one day at an animal market in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, it mutated and made the jump from animal to people. At first, only animals could give it to a person. But here is the scary part ... in just **TWO WEEKS** it mutated again and gained the ability to jump from human to human. Scientists call this quick ability "slippery". This Coronavirus, not being in any form a "human" virus (whereas we would all have some natural or acquired immunity), took off like a rocket. And this was because Humans have no known immunity ... doctors have no known medicines for it.

And it just so happens that this particular mutated animal virus changed itself in such a way that it causes great damage to human lungs. That's why Coronavirus is different from seasonal flu, or H1N1, or any other type of influenza ... this one is slippery as hell. And it's a lung eater.

We really have no tools in our shed with this. History has shown that fast and immediate closings of public places have helped in the past pandemics. Philadelphia (which held a big public parade against medical advice) and Baltimore were reluctant to close events in 1918 and they were the hardest hit in the US during the Spanish Flu.

Be smart folks ... acting like you're unafraid is so not sexy right now.

SO IN CLOSING THIS SPECIAL EDITION; **be smart: stay safe and stay separated!!**

From Your Pension Board of Trustees