A Unifor delegation handed nearly 35,000 signed petition cards to Ontario Health Minister Dr. Eric Hoskins, asking him to hand the cards over to Federal Minister Jane Philpott at the October 18 federal and provincial health ministers meeting in Toronto.

“We present these cards to you, and ask that you pass them on to Minister Philpott to underline the importance and urgency of health care funding,” Katha Fortier, Unifor Assistant to the National President, said to Hoskins as she handed over several Unifor bags filled with signed postcards.

Hoskins promised to pass the cards along.

“I want to thank you for your commitment to Canada’s health care system,” Hoskins said. “I think I might even have signed one of these cards.”

Unifor health care members circulated the cards in support of four key demands: a national public drug program; sufficient federal and provincial funding for high-quality acute care, home care and long-term care; a senior’s strategy to care for our aging population; protection and enforcement of the Canada Health Act to ensure health care remains public for the public good.

“Canadians treasure our health care system and want to continue to count on care that is provided to every person equally, regardless of their wealth or location,” said Fortier.
120 Unifor Members Approve New 3 Year Deal with Princess Court

A new 3 year contract between Unifor Local 324-14 and the District of Kenora Home for the Aged at Princess Court has been ratified by 80% of 120 Unifor members on November 17th. George Smith, Unifor Local 324 President states “Unifor members in Dryden were pleased with the solid monetary gains and language improvements achieved in this new contract.”

Stephen Boon, Unifor National Representative added “despite ongoing funding challenges, we are pleased to see that our healthcare members in Dryden have secured a solid agreement with wage increases at the upper end of the provincial range.” Top rates of pay will increase to $43.88/hour under the new deal.

Key highlights include a 3 year deal with 1.75% in the first 2 years and 1.85% in the third year, increase in shift differentials, additional 6 months of unpaid parental leave, increase to vision and coverage for eye exams, increase to shoe and uniform allowance and improvements in health benefits and language.

A Warm Welcome to New Unifor Members in Health Care:

- Good Shepherd Centres (Assisted Living and Personal Support Services) in Hamilton, ON
- Shannex (Staffing Coordinators) in Halifax, NS
- ParaMed in Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON (case coordinators)
- Groves Memorial Hospital, Fergus, ON
  Office & Clerical workers
- Village of Wentworth Heights Nursing Home in Hamilton, ON

Update on Extendicare Master Bargaining

“Negotiations for Extendicare Master Bargaining are ongoing”, states National Representative Kelly-Anne Orr. Working with Local Presidents of Local 302, Local 504, Local 2458, Local 1106, Local 1359, Local 8300 and their bargaining committees, the group representing 10 nursing homes across Ontario, have met to negotiate for a new collective agreement in June of this year, with the master bargaining committee focused and determined to have a bargained settlement they could proudly take back to their membership to ratify. However negotiations ended June 29, when the bargaining committee could not accept Extendicare’s wage offer.

Unifor launched an awareness campaign to demonstrate the plight of workers. “It’s time to recognize the contribution our members make towards caring for society’s most vulnerable and it’s that care that results in the employers’ increasing profits,” says Local 2458 President Bruce Dickie.

September 8th, 2016 brought about a conciliation hearing, where Extendicare proffered a new monetary figure, which was unanimously rejected by the Extendicare Local Presidents. This led the bargaining committee to file a no board request and on September 23rd, 2016. SEIU entered into arbitration with a large number of nursing homes in its central group and both Unifor and CUPE offered research and support to SEIU. The award is now public and Unifor is awaiting dates to get back to the table to negotiate a settlement.

Save the Date

January 30-31, 2017 in Ottawa the Canadian Health Coalition Conference: A National Public Drug Plan for All - Let’s Make it Happen is scheduled to be held on Monday, January 30th at the Lord Elgin Hotel in Ottawa followed Tuesday, January 31st with lobbying on the hill and other related activities. Notice went out with a registration deadline of November 30, 2016.

The Annual Health Care conference is scheduled to be held in Port Elgin, commencing on June 9th and concluding on June 11th 2017. “We are already talking with some exciting speakers and planning a conference that addresses topics covering issues that our health care members are facing today” said Andy Savela, Director of Health Care.
Unifor Local 1106 Celebrated its 10th Anniversary as a Local with an Executive Council at the Unifor Education Centre in Port Elgin

The Unifor Local 1106 event followed a recent merger with Unifor local 1524 and provided a great opportunity for members from both locals to meet and get to know each other, build solidarity and discuss issues of importance with their membership. The council discussed a number of topics such as the TPP, electoral reform and violence in health care. The group was addressed by Ontario Regional Director Naureen Rizvi, Assistant to the President Katha Fortier and Health Care Director Andy Savela who gave a first-hand account what work the national union is doing.

The focus on the weekend was to engage our members and have dialogue about what we do well and what we need to improve. Ken Lewenza, past CAW President, motivated the membership to engage with each other and continue to build a strong local union propelling us forward to continued success.

Unifor Local 302 Members Reach a Tentative Agreement with the Group of 11 Nursing Homes

Members of Local 302 have reached a tentative settlement with 11 Nursing Homes that has been unanimously recommended by their bargaining committee. “The employer was tough throughout these negotiations insisting on concessions however the committee stood firm and resisted. At the end of the day we feel we have negotiated a settlement that exceeds the established pattern” said Nancy McMurphy President of Unifor Local 302. “The deal also provides other gains that will make a positive impact on the work environment of our members”.

Ratification votes are currently being conducted. The committee was supported by National Staff Representative Robert Buchanan.

Newly ratified Local 8300 Members at Burnbrae Gardens, Pleasant Meadow Manor and Village Green Long Term Care

Members of Local 8300 at Burnbrae Gardens, Pleasant Meadow Manor and Village Green have a new collective agreement.” Our members have voted overwhelmingly in favour of a new collective agreement” said National Representative Kelly-Anne Orr. This new deal provides 1.4% wage increases in each year of the new 3-year agreement.

Other Highlights include increases to weekend premium and increased vacation entitlement to 7 weeks with 14% accrual of vacation pay after 28 years of service, with more flexible language in paid holidays. They also will receive increases in vision care and their uniform allowance. The RPN’s will receive a 35¢ adjustment over the life of the agreement.

Jake Gibson, President of Unifor Local 8300 reports “solid gains were made for our members with new Employee’s Advocate language, improved language around job postings, seniority, bereavement leave and hours of work.” Gibson also commended his bargaining committee saying “they were committed to gaining an agreement they could bring back and recommend to the membership.”
Unifor Supports Long Term Care Reform

Unifor showed up in large numbers to support reforming Long Term Care Homes in the public’s interest at recent a conference hosted by the Ontario Health Coalition. The conference saw many presenters including Unifor Assistant to the National President Katha Fortier. Participants discussed the state of long term care across Canada and the key elements of much needed progressive reform in long term care. Shawn Rouse, President of The Unifor Health Care Council noted that the theme of the conference fell in line with the Unions reinvigorated Long Term Care Campaign “Dignity 4 Resident and Respect 4 Staff”, a mandate of Unifor members as the Federal and Provincial Governments negotiate a new Health Accord.

Revera Master Bargaining Ongoing

Master bargaining commenced November 7-11, 2016 with the Revera Group of Homes from across Ontario representing Local 229, Local 504, Local 1106 and Local 8300. The master bargaining committee are well seasoned members and their years of experience are instrumental in dealing with the company at the bargaining table. This is another tough round of bargaining and the committee is staying focused and resisting the employer’s proposed concessions. They are determined to make gains for their membership.

“It is a great opportunity and pleasure to work with this great group of health care leadership” states National Representative Kelly-Anne Orr. “Our proposals reflect the areas where we want to improve the working lives of the membership in areas of economics, wages and benefits and proposals that reflect the need to be sensitive to the affect this work has on the health and well-being of our members. It is an opportunity for Revera to recognize the contributions our members make to the success of their business.”

Although a tentative agreement was not reached by the October 31st deadline, the committee remains determined to negotiate a settlement when they return to the table in the near future.

Nova Scotia’s Long-Term Care Workers Rally Against Government Cuts

On September 15, workers from long-term care facilities in Cape Breton and Halifax joined other Unifor members and supporters in front of Northwood Manor to protest Premier Stephen McNeil’s cuts to long-term care funding across the province.

The Victoria Haven facility in Glace Bay, Cape Breton and Northwood Manor in Halifax have suffered recent layoffs as a direct result of budget cuts brought down by the McNeil government over the past two years.

“These cuts to long-term care are painful for the elderly residents and the workers in these facilities,” said Lana Payne, Unifor Atlantic Regional Director. “This government ran on promises that they would be the party to ‘improve health care’ during the last election. And now they’re trying to balance the books on the backs of our senior citizens. It’s appalling.”

Members of both opposition parties attended the rally to show their support for long-term care workers and to speak out against the McNeil government’s cuts.

Unifor circulated a petition for attendees to sign, and pledged to keep up the pressure on the Premier. Unifor has been, and will continue to be, a powerful voice in support of public health care in the province of Nova Scotia and across the country.

To learn more about the campaign to defend long-term care in Nova Scotia and to sign the petition, visit www.unifor.org/NovaScotiaLTC

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