



JERRY DIAS NATIONAL PRESIDENT • PETER KENNEDY NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER • MICHEL OUMET QUEBEC DIRECTOR

Hospital Bargaining Strategy Session



Chair people, local union leadership and national staff representatives representing Ontario hospitals met in Toronto December 9th and 10th to review past bargaining and plan strategy for negotiations that will commence in 2014.

In the most recent round of bargaining, three hospitals were successful in negotiating a three year agreement, resulting in a 2.75% increase in the final year. Other hospitals refused to negotiate a third year, and under the legislation that governs their collective bargaining, the Hospital Labour Dispute Arbitration Act, or HLDAA, the maximum term that can be awarded is two years unless the parties agreed otherwise.

Assistant to the President, Deb Tveit reported that for obvious reasons none of the hospitals would agree to a third year. "They were being cautious, and were fairly confident arbitrators would only award the mandated 2 year wage freeze, which was the case."

"The previous round of bargaining saw employers coming after sick leave plans, and the bargaining committees were very determined to resist that." Tveit adds, "We were able to hold onto our full sick leave plans without the concessions that some other unions had. The committee was very determined to not lose anything, so on that front it was successful."

The meeting included an economic overview of the provincial economy with a discussion about the impact of a possible spring election. Ontario Regional Director, Katha Fortier noted that all of the participants recognized the importance of getting into bargaining as quickly as possible. "Everyone committed to holding proposals early in the new year and sending notice to bargain early. Members are clearly focused on monetary gains this round and to do that we will need to go in fast and early, and organize what is happening at all tables."

There will be a master group within the northern hospitals. Other hospitals will bargain individually, but efforts will be coordinated through the national union.

Where Can I Find The Pulse?

The Pulse newsletter, published every two months is sent to any local unions that request copies. It is always available on the Unifor web site; www.unifor.org then click on "What's New", and then click on "Newsletters". Scroll down till you find The Pulse.

Local unions and unit chairs can order copies delivered directly to them by emailing the request to katha.fortier@unifor.org

IN THIS ISSUE:

- 2014 Health Care Conference
- Cape Breton Supports Veterans
- Local 229 Rally - St. Joseph's Hospital
- Ontario Health Care Leadership Meeting

Unifor Local 229 Paramedic Receives Exemplary Service Medal

When Rob Corbeil, is not dedicating his time to Habitat for Humanity Thunder Bay as a volunteer/master play house builder; his other job is pretty important too! Rob is a Primary Care Paramedic in Thunder Bay and for close to three decades he has provided many throughout our community with excellent front-line patient care.



Rob is one of three Superior North EMS paramedics that have received and Exemplary Service Medal from the Governor General of Canada in 2013. This service medal recognizes the many men and women who work in fields that can involve potential personal risk to themselves in an effort to helping others. These are extraordinary efforts on their part and such efforts are carried out with great distinction by people like Rob Corbeil.

Rob was presented his medal by Major General Richard Rohmer, Canada's most decorated person, at a special ceremony in York Region, Ontario, on September 26, 2013. Habitat for Humanity Local 229 President Kari Jefford says that Thunder Bay is very grateful to Rob for all he does for our community each and every day. "We could not be happier; to offer our congratulations to Rob and his fellow EMS Paramedics; also recognized for their exemplary service to the Superior North EMS Program."

Photo Tour Coming Soon

A photo tour, sponsored by the (former) CAW Ontario Health Care Council will be touring several Unifor health care workplaces February 19th and 20th under the direction of Shawn Rouse, Council President and national staff representative Kelly-Anne Orr.

Rouse indicates that the purpose of the tour is to create a library of professional pictures of our members at work. "We can store these photos and use them for variety of purposes from leaflets to billboards. We've done this in the past, but we are definitely due for an update."

The tour will stop in an assortment of workplaces, including hospitals, nursing homes, ambulance services and community agencies. If you are interested in having your workplace included, please contact Kelly-Anne Orr at kelly-anne.orr@unifor.org

2014 Health Care Conference

Notice will go out to local unions soon for the 2014 Health Care Conference, scheduled in Halifax, Nova Scotia May 23, 24, and 25. The theme this year will be "Standing up for Medicare; Defending Workers Rights."

Assistant to the President, Deb Tveit explains that the theme is two-fold because of the many challenges we are facing. "Federally we must do more to pressure the government to renew the health accord so that the provinces have the resources they need to continue to provide services, especially in our hospitals. And all workers, including health care, are at risk of having their hard fought labour rights taken away from them."

Those interested in participating in this year's conference should contact their local union for further information.



Cape Breton Supports Veterans

Members from health care Locals 4300 and 4306 were highly visible at a November rally at the Royal Canadian Legion in Sydney, NS to show their displeasure with the federal government's decision to close several offices across the country.

Susan Gill, President of Local 4600 said "veterans need to be shown the respect and the dignity that they have earned serving our country; attempting to balance a budget with cuts to veterans is shameful and should not happen."

With the Sydney office scheduled for closure next year, veterans will have to travel five hours to Halifax for services. Supporters marched with the veterans singing O Canada, and chanting "lest we forget".

Local 229 Rally's at St. Joseph's Hospital



More than 100 Unifor Local 229 members and supporters participated in an information picket outside St Joseph's Hospital in Thunder Bay on Friday January 17, 2014.

The purpose of the rally was to highlight issues identified by members surrounding increased workloads, management

compensation in the era of wage freezes, redeployment of staff, job security and serious workplace injuries.

President of Local 229 Kari Jefford states: "every day we have members reporting serious injuries and fatigue. They are all doing their very best to serve patient's needs, support families and community groups at what I feel, is a detriment to them. Our members work short, have huge workloads and large amounts of stressors in their work lives. They do their jobs with incredible care and compassion putting their patients and their families first. They are looking to their union for support and we are here to support them."

Assistant to the President Deb Tveit who attended the rally noted that "In the past two years our workers, have taken a two year wage freeze but their workloads are increasing, work stress is multiplying causing injuries and some members report they have lost their passion for the work that they do. The top administration have taken wage increases stating that the legislation allows them to do that. Alongside the frontline staff's zero wage increase it makes it difficult for members to see how this is fair."

Tveit adds, "Healthcare in Ontario and in Canada is under attack. We as Ontarians and Canadians need to educate ourselves politically in order to understand what is at stake for us in the coming months and years."

Taking the SAFER Campaign Public

Staffing Alliance for Every Resident, or SAFER, continues to plan strategy to push the government to implement an evidence-based, minimum, measurable, enforceable standard of care in our nursing homes.

The coalition, which includes partners Tamara Daly, Associate Professor and CIHR Research Chair, Paul Tuttle, President of Extencicare, and Jane Meadus, Institutional Advocate with the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly, will bring their campaign to the public in February. Ontario Director Katha Fortier, reports that there will be a series of events that will include the launch of a web page, and a Queens Park press conference. "Our unlikely coalition itself is attracting attention and so we are ready to take this next step, after making our case to the Minister of Health and several ministry officials. We've seen far too many preventable tragedies in our homes. We all believe, that with appropriate staffing levels, nursing homes can become a safe, and even a desirable haven for people requiring care."

SAFER submitted a proposal to the Finance Minister as part of their pre-budget consultations in January.

Ontario Health Care Leadership Meeting

Unifor President, Jerry Dias met with 200 workplace leaders, local union executives and national staff representatives on January 22nd in Toronto, for a day of dialogue and evaluation.

Dias states "Health care is not only our largest sector in the province, but the services they provide are critical to all our members and to every single person in the province. We want to make sure we are crystal clear about a communications strategy that includes making sure we are offering this unique sector every support we can."

The meeting concluded with constructive suggestions for ensuring Unifor is highly visible in the sector, and lines of communication are open. Assistant to the President Deb Tveit committed whatever resources are needed. "Developing



leadership and supporting the education and training needs will build strong locals to create a strong and progressive union. We can continue to strengthen our publication "The Pulse" but will add other tools like a new member orientation kit and social media options."

National Day of Action to Mark the Expiry of the 2004 Health Accord

The Canadian Health Coalition, along with their partners are planning a national day of action March 31, 2014, to mark the expiry of the 2004 Health Accord, that allowed for steady, and consistently increasing transfer payments from the Federal Government to the provinces to provide services.

Ontario Regional Director, Katha Fortier who sits on the CHC board states that this issue should be critical to every single Canadian who values our public health care system. "It's clear that the Harper government has no desire to even discuss this with the provinces, and they've given every indication that they do not intend to support, let alone enforce the Canada Health Act.

Watch for further details of events, including a 2014 Medicare Tour.

Registered Practical Nurses to Lobby Queens Park

In follow-up to the Ontario RPN meeting last October, a lobby day at Queens Park has been set up for Monday March 3rd. Participants will be asked to come into Toronto for training the afternoon prior, and meetings will be pre-arranged for them to meet directly with MPP's to discuss the value of an RPN. "Who best to describe the impact that RPN's have in our health care system than a practicing nurse" says Kelly-Anne Orr, RPN, and now national staff representative, who is coordinating the lobby. "They are an articulate group, and know their roles, and can convey that to MPP's who in all likelihood have no idea what they do."

Notice of the meeting has been sent to health care local unions who are being asked to send at least two RPN's to the lobby. For more information contact your local union.

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