



## Local 598 Nursing Homes Protest



Since health care workers from the Elizabeth Centre, Finlandia Nursing Home, St. Joseph's Villa and St. Gabriel's Villa (long-term care facilities in Sudbury) joined Unifor Local 598/Mine Mills, they have negotiated agreements.

"Now these same employers are taking the position to ride the wave to arbitration," reports Local 598 President, Anne Marie MacInnis. "We are in conciliation with St. Joseph's Villa and St. Gabriel's Villa and last week we were issued a no board report for the bargaining committee at Finlandia Nursing Home. Members are angry that their employer's insist on zero wage adjustments while the owners/operators continue to hire more managers and continues to propose "cost containment" concessions."

On Sunday May 12<sup>th</sup> the members at the Elizabeth Centre and St. Gabriel's Villa held an information picket outside their workplaces. Members at Finlandia Nursing Home and St. Joseph's Villa are planning one soon.

Members from Family Council's and Residents Council's are asking to meet with the Union. MacInnis says that "We will meet with them because its important they understand what these workers have been through, and that we find allies in this fight."

## Extendicare Preps for Negotiations

Chairs from ten Extendicare Homes met in Toronto last week to prepare for central bargaining, for an agreement that expires July 31, 2014.

"These workers are frustrated because they have not had a real wage increase since 2011, despite the fact that their employer has turned a significant profit," says lead negotiator and National Staff Representative, Kelly-Anne Orr. "They have been lumped in with public sector workers, even though their employer was virtually unaffected by the recession."

"Negotiations will follow for our two other master groups that expire at the end of October," reports Assistant to the President, Deb Tveit. "Our group of Revera Homes and the group of 24 will very likely have the same priorities, and we intend to do whatever we need to do to support them."

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# Nurses Week 2014

With more than 28,000 members in the health care sector, Unifor is proud to support National Nurses Week.

“Our health care system relies on the hard work of the people employed in the field, and it is important that we honour their work during this week – and all year,” National President Jerry Dias says.

National Nursing Week takes place each year during the week of May 12, Florence Nightingale’s birthday. Since its founding, Unifor has been a strong supporter of health workers, and Canada’s universal medicare system, on several fronts.

In Nova Scotia, Unifor has led the struggle against labour laws removing collective bargaining rights for health care workers. In Ontario, Unifor has worked to ensure that the vital role played by Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs) in our hospitals is recognized, and that their voices are heard on health care issues and patient care.



**Unifor Local 1106 members at Trinity Village enjoy a fruit tray sent to every department in all health care workplaces to celebrate Nurses Week**



**Unifor Ontario Regional Director, and RPN, Katha Fortier joined Local 27 members at St. Joseph’s Hospital in London to celebrate Nurses Week. All members were given lanyards and pens, as well as treated to coffee and cookies.**

“For many patients and their families, RPNs are the face of health care,” said Katha Fortier, Unifor’s Ontario Regional Director and an RPN. “Ultimately they are part of a team of care givers and support staff that work incredibly hard to care for patients through the entire spectrum of care.”

Unifor has also worked to improve the working conditions of Personal Support Workers in long-term care by advocating for an evidenced based, minimum, measurable, enforceable standard of care in long-term care.

In April, Unifor pledged \$50,000 to Canadian Doctors for Medicare, which has gained intervener status in the upcoming B.C. Supreme Court case of Dr. Brian Day, who is challenging B.C.’s ban on private health care.

“In this time of economic upheaval and uncertainty, Canadians rely on their health care system more than ever and so we commit to deepening our fight to defend the principles of the Canada Health Act and expanding its scope to include pharmacare, home care and long-term care,” Unifor’s statement on Nursing week reads.

To read the full statement: [click here](#).

## Northern Hospital Master Negotiations Set

Negotiations will commence July 14th in Thunder Bay for the Northern Hospital Group that is set to expire in October of this year.

“Our goal is to negotiate a master agreement with solid wage increases,” said National Staff Representative Andy Savela who is leading the bargaining. “These workers did their part in 2011 with a two year wage freeze. Since then we’ve seen administration salaries increase, and it’s time for our members to be recognized.”

“Master negotiations are a voluntary process with Unifor members voting each round to participate,” notes Ontario Director, Katha Fortier. “Unlike other unions, when we bargain centrally each bargaining unit is represented at the master table, and all have equal input into decisions made.”

The Northern Hospital Group represents workers in 16 bargaining units, working in 10 hospitals, totalling 3200 members.

## Ontario Election June 12, 2014

Ontarians will be heading to the polls next month, in what many are saying is the most important election we will ever face.

"The obvious threat to all workers, are the Conservatives, lead by Tim Hudak," says Ontario Regional Director, Katha Fortier. "He's made it clear that his first move would be to fire 100,000 public sector workers, with cuts even deeper than what we say during the Mike Harris reign."

Unifor is working with other labour unions and progressive partners to make sure that this doesn't happen.

"With our three party system and the polls changing weekly, our strategy will be to put our resources into defeating Tories," says Assistant to the President Deb Tveit. "We are asking our members to use their vote wisely, and consider not only their future, but the future of our province; if Hudak forms the government we will quickly become a province with low tax rates and even lower wages. Hudak cannot be trusted."

Unifor members are asked to support candidates who share our values on public health care, education, and progressive labour laws.

### Caressant Care Workers Plan Protest

Unifor is requesting support for the workers at

Caressant Care Nursing Homes in Courtland, Woodstock and Harriston, members of locals 302, 636, and 1106.

"The employer has told them unequivocally they will not negotiate wage increases in this current round of bargaining," reports National Staff Representative, Robert Buchanan. This despite the fact that in the last round, after being forced to arbitration, an arbitrator awarded no pay increases; these workers have not had a wage increase since 2011."

"What is clear here is the nursing home operators in Ontario know the arbitration system worked in their favour, and this has allowed them to delay and stonewall negotiating with our Union," notes Assistant to the President, Deb Tveit. "We are demanding this Employer return to the bargaining table and negotiate decent pay increases for these workers."

The Rally will take place Wednesday May 29, 2014, from 11:00am till 1:00pm, in front of Caressant Care Head office, 264 Norwich Avenue, Woodstock.



## Giant "Rock-In" Chair Tour

The Ontario Health Coalition "Rock-In" chair tour will begin crossing the province on Wednesday May 21, and will continue through the first week of June.

The goal of the tour is to demand a minimum care standard of four hours of hands on care per day and to improve access to care and reduce wait times.

Unifor members are asked to support the tour in their community. For a list of locations visit:

<http://www.web.net/ohc/>

## 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](http://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 [healthcare@unifor.org](mailto:healthcare@unifor.org)

## Chelsey Park Retirement Home Settlement

Nursing Week took on a different tone for a group of RPN's working at this Retirement Home in London Ontario.

"Not only did they vote 100% in favour of a renewal collective agreement, but it was what was included in that settlement that proved a victory," reported Staff Representative Robert Buchanan. "They successfully renewed a letter of understanding providing a minimum staffing for RPN's."

"This home was recently sold to a new owner who wanted this letter deleted which would allow other staff to do the RPN job" Buchanan added. "But the nurses were not going to settle without it."

In addition to that the Union negotiated increases in wages, benefits, and uniform allowance and payment for the RPN's annual certification.

## Ontario Regional Council Passes Health Care Recommendation

### Canada's universal, single-payer health care

system is a reflection of our values as Canadians, Dr. Danielle Martin told a crowded assembly hall as part of the Ontario Regional Council.

"It's the highest expression of Canadians caring for one another," said Martin.

But with this, there is an obligation to meet the health care needs of Canadians - including expanding the system to create a national pharmacare program and addressing other issues. Martin helped found Canadian Doctors for Medicare in 2006 to provide a voice for Canadian doctors who want to strengthen and improve Canada's universal publicly funded health care system.

According to Martin, one in 10 Canadians doesn't take their medication or fill prescriptions because they cannot afford to do so. Martin said she has seen this first hand in her own practice, with patients landing in the emergency room with preventable conditions because they couldn't afford their medication.

Martin also raised the importance of defending the public nature of Canada's health care system. Canadian Doctors for Medicare have gained intervener status in the

upcoming B.C. Supreme Court case of Dr. Brian Day, who is challenging B.C.'s ban on private health care. She called the court challenge a brazen attack on universal public health care.

Unifor committed to donating \$50,000 in total to Canadian Doctors for Medicare and a number of other local unions pledged several thousands of dollars in donations.

Martin's concerns were echoed by others in the room - as dozens of activists got up to speak.

Ontario Health Care Council chair and Unifor Local 1106 Financial Secretary Shawn Rouse called the creeping threat of private clinics "death by a thousand cuts" and warned that if the B.C. challenge is not defeated, privatization will deeply compromise the universal Canadian system.

Darlene Prouse, Unifor Local 2458 Second Vice President, said the issue is not just about health care workers. "It must be our wake-up call that we could lose something that is dear to all of us."

Ontario Council delegates voted unanimously to play a leading role in defending Canada's health care system, including with Canadian Doctors for Medicare.

For more information on Canadian Doctors for Medicare, visit: <http://www.canadiandoctorsformedicare.ca/>

To read the full recommendation from ORC visit:

[http://www.unifor.org/sites/default/files/attachments/recommendations\\_directors\\_web.pdf](http://www.unifor.org/sites/default/files/attachments/recommendations_directors_web.pdf)

### Paramedics Discuss Election Priorities

Unifor Paramedic Units in Ontario have been invited to participate in a conference call to talk about priorities for the upcoming provincial election.

"We know that the passing of Bill 67 that would have seen emergency care workers covered by WSIB for post-traumatic stress disorder essentially fell through the cracks with the election call," reports National Staff Representative, Corey Vermey. "We want to make certain candidates we support are committed to seeing it brought back."

Unifor has committed to developing a forum for our paramedics to meet and discuss common concerns, and this will be a first step in this process.

National EMS week will be celebrated this year May 25, to 31st. Unifor commends the work of these dedicated first responders who face incredible risks to provide care.

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