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## Labour Solidarity Challenges Nova Scotia Health Sector Restructuring



Unifor is linking arms with other unions in the province to defend health care workers and ensure no frontline jobs will be cut as the Nova Scotia Liberal government prepares to make good on its election promise to merge nine district health authorities into one. Health Minister Leo Glavine intends to complete the merger by April 1, 2015; forecasting that the province will save \$13 million a year through amalgamation. The merged authority would propel the health sector towards

provincial bargaining at the same time that the Liberals have attacked free collective bargaining and the right to strike.

In a June joint media release, the unions responded to Glavine to “reaffirm their commitment to work cooperatively to ensure healthcare workers’ rights are respected during this process, and will continue to work together on this issue as the Province moves forward with restructuring.” The health care unions in Nova Scotia are filing a legal challenge to Bill 37, the legislation introduced in April this year that severely limits the rights of health care workers to freely negotiate collective agreements up to and including the right to strike.

Atlantic Region Director, Lana Payne underscored the continuing vital importance of unions meeting the challenges

of restructuring and Bill 37 in unity and solidarity; “it is absolutely fundamental that the government acknowledge and respect a worker’s right of choice, up to and including a withdrawal of their services in order to provide all workers a meaningful voice in negotiations”. “If we are to work in unity on terms that our members have consented to, rather than have had imposed on them, it will only improve access to and the quality of health services for patients, said Susan Taylor, National Rep.

Unifor will be communicating with the 4,000 health care members in Nova Scotia as developments unfold. While much remains to be resolved, the extraordinary levels of cooperation and solidarity amongst the health sector unions in Nova Scotia can only produce positive outcomes for all members.

### Ontario Health Sector Bargaining Update

Northern Ontario hospitals represented by Locals 229 and 1359 and Extencicare nursing homes represented by Locals 302, 504, 1359, 2458 and 8300 opened negotiations last week. Unfortunately, after a week of productive negotiations resolving local issues and non-monetary language, neither bargaining group was able to achieve a settlement that fairly and equitably recognized the efforts and sacrifices of our members.

There will be an Ontario hospital wide Unifor Local Presidents meeting taking place with President Jerry Dias on July 18, 2014 to further discuss workplace and community action in the wake of the break down in master bargaining. Further information will be coming through your Local as we continue efforts to negotiate an acceptable settlement.

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# Local 229 Hosts RPNAO at Nurses Forum

Local 229 invited the Registered Practical Nursing Association of Ontario (RPNAO) to Thunder Bay for a meeting at St. Joseph's Care Group and an evening Nurses' Forum at the Local 229 office to discuss RPN utilization issues. The guest speakers included Annette Weeres RN, BScN, MN, Director Professional Practice, Registered Practical Nursing Association of Ontario (RPNAO) and Beth McCracken RPN, CAE, Nursing Practice and Outreach Specialist, RPNAO and Ontario Regional Director Katha Fortier RPN.

At the request of Jefford, RPNAO attended the meeting at St. Joseph's Care Group in Thunder Bay to discuss RPN utilization. Jefford stressed the growing importance of full utilization and respect in the workplace to staff morale. "We appreciated the work that they do as the professional association that is able to articulate the value of using nurses to their full scope of practice."

Members of Local 229 Executive Board including President Kari Jefford are pictured above with Ontario Regional Director, Katha Fortier and speakers from RPNAO.

The Nurses' Forum held at the Local 229 office in Thunder Bay discussed the 'where, when and how of full utilization'. The speakers and ensuing discussion focused on the current challenges and successes in nursing practices in Northern



Ontario including long term care, acute care hospitals, and primary care clinics.

Those attending the Forum also heard further about the RPNAO Role Clarity Project. The RPNAO has embarked on an initiative to gain a better understanding of enablers/barriers to utilization of RPNs' knowledge, skill and judgment for quality patient outcomes. Their survey consists of 20 questions and should take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete. Feedback from Unifor RPNs is valuable and all information will remain confidential.

To access the questionnaire, please use the link or copy/past the link directly into your web browser:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/YB3RGHM>

## First Contract for Local 504 Members at Blackadar Continuing Care Centre

**Members at Blackadar; an 80-bed private nursing home in Dundas, Ontario managed by Extencicare recently ratified their first collective agreement. Using the Unifor Extencicare Tecumseh contract as a model, the Local 504 bargaining committee negotiated wage increases that are a minimum of 4 per cent above current rates, substantial lump sum payments due shortly after ratification, new shift and weekend premiums and health and pension benefits as well as significant improvements in paid time off and many other beneficial provisions of a Union contract**

Bargaining was especially challenging

due to management changes at the home and ongoing difficulties transitioning from the family-owned management team to Extencicare. The agreement was unanimously ratified by 100% of members attending the meeting and the bargaining committee and Local 504 leadership are busy getting the new collective agreement in place with a new Administrator.

As committee member Julie Tavaras said, "My experience with the whole thing was very confusing at first, but a very great experience for learning all that I did. My committee partner Cindy Hasler and I feel that we gained a lot for our fellow co-workers and gave them a



lot more than what we had." A hearty welcome to Unifor for all members at Blackadar able to enjoy the security and benefits of collective bargaining.

Pictured are Local 504 President Dave Reston, Julie Tavaras PSW and Cindy Hasler PSW. Taking the picture was National Rep Mike Menicanin.



## Local 598 Members Continue Workplace Rallies in Sudbury

Following up on workplace rallies held in May, Local 598 is maintaining the pressure on area nursing homes. Despite several rounds of voluntarily negotiating agreements, these same employers now insist on zero wage adjustments and other concessions. Local 598 President Anne Marie MacInnis has made the position of the Local's 450 long-term care members abundantly clear: negotiate a contract with wage increases that recognizes the dedication and effort of these members.

The chair of the resident council is pictured above with some of the members, and is fully supportive of the workers.

MacInnis said that support has been overwhelming. "We have been joined by many of our retirees, who fully support our goals, and members of the public are encouraging; not surprisingly, they understand that there are just not enough of us to provide the care with dignity that the residents deserve.

Following workplace rallies on June 25 at St. Joseph's Villa and July 2 at Villa St. Gabriel, the local 598 is preparing for further rallies on July 16 at The Elizabeth Centre, and on July 30 at Finlandia Nursing Home. The rallies are highlighting the need for a minimum measurable enforceable standard of care, long wait lists, and the need for a fair contract for caregiving staff.

## Settlement Ratified by Local 302 Members at Marshall Gowland Manor

Local 302 members at Marshall Gowland Manor, a municipal home for the aged in Sarnia, Ontario voted overwhelmingly by 97 per cent to ratify a tentative agreement presented by their committee on June 25th. The general wages increases in the 3-year deal are 1.5 per cent; 1.75 per cent, and 1.75 per cent. There is also a 25¢ per hour RPN adjustment each year of the agreement.

The members also benefit from improvements in vision coverage; including eye exams; as well as increases in massage therapy coverage; shift and weekend premiums, and an increase in the Paid Education Leave (PEL) contribution. The Employer had come to the table with proposals for a 'cut and burn' package originally, which included taking away the paid lunch; top-up for WSIB and even eliminating the uniform allowance. They came to the conclusion that it was probably best to withdraw that garbage. National Rep Mike Byrne and Local 302 president and NEB member, Nancy McMurphy assisted the committee. McMurphy said: "the committee were extremely solid and feel great about the outcome".

## Where Can I Find the Pulse?

The Pulse newsletter, published every two months, if not more frequently as events dictate, 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)



## Local 8300 Members at Kingston Interval House Ratify

Members of Local 8300 strongly ratified a settlement on July 9th. The women's shelter settlement provided a 1 year term with minimum 1.5% per cent wage increase as well as further pay equity lump sums; with some members receiving up to \$1.75 per hour and casual relief workers receiving their first raise in seven years. According to Local 8300 President, Jake Gibson, "needless to say the committee was extremely happy". Gibson is pictured with committee members Jami Cole and Lori McKenzie and National Rep Mike Armstrong.



## Unifor at World Pride in Toronto

This year was an important and historic year for LGBT members and allies in our union. Not only did Toronto host World Pride, where thousands of people from all around the world gathered, but it was the first opportunity that we have had to show off our new union at Pride with pride.



## Pension Break-Through for Local 229 Members at George Jefferies

Local 229 members at George Jefferies Children's Centre ratified a renewal agreement with an important break-through provision - moving this group into the Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan (HOOPP) - a large public sector multi-employer defined benefit pension plan. George Jefferies is a paediatric outpatient health facility located in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

This group includes Speech-Language Pathologists, Speech Therapists, Augmentative Communication Assistants, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Therapy Assistants, Physiotherapy Assistant, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Communication Disorders Assistant, Social Workers, Music Therapists, Education Consultants, Recreation Therapist and Rehabilitation Technicians providing services.

## 2014 Health Care Conference Highlights

Looking for video from the Health Care Conference? Highlights from the 2014 Health Care Conference are available for viewing on YouTube. Follow the link below and please feel free to share with contacts and on social media: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vleDej9nnhk>



## Unifor Joins with Ontario Health Coalition at Queen's Park

Activists and leadership from Unifor joined with the OHC at a Day of Action at Queen's Park on the issue of private clinics. The Coalition deliver tens of thousands of Ballots from a citizen-led referendum conducted throughout the spring to the Ontario Legislature. The campaign seeks to keep hospital services intact in our public hospitals rather than transfer them to private specialty clinics.

Ontario Regional Director Katha Fortier speaks to the rally in front of the Provincial Legislature and next to the 82,000 postcard ballots cast during the campaign.

Following the presentation of the 82,000 ballots, supporters of the OHC met with their recently (re-) elected MPPs to reinforce the campaign message especially within the Liberal caucus and to maximize the pressure on the Premier and Health Minister to stop the move from local hospitals of surgical services and treatments to private clinics before it is too late.

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