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## Federal Election – the most critical vote for Medicare in our generation

On October 19<sup>th</sup> 2015, health care workers can let politicians know they want a government in Ottawa that stands up for health care services and the workers that provide them when they go to the polls to elect a new government later this year. And not only should our next Prime Minister commit to restoring the billions of dollars cut by the Harper Conservatives; they need to take immediate steps to put health care back on the right track.

We need to elect a federal government committed to crackdown on the profits made by private health care providers; to really enforce national standards, and expand health coverage for prescription drugs, seniors care and home care. We desperately need a national strategy to truly support overworked, stressed out and fatigued health care workers and to ensure safe staffing levels and workloads.

This year, we can and must truly make the difference in electing MPs in our communities who will fight for health care rather than ones that sit silently as the government abandons its responsibilities as a real partner in the future of Canada's signature social program. Members can also participate in the 'I Will Vote' Pledge by signing up online at [www.uniforvotes.ca](http://www.uniforvotes.ca) and clicking on the tab: Pledge Your Vote:



Also, under the Facts tab, there are digital "Sector cards", including the health sector that can be shared via social media ([http://www.uniforvotes.ca/health\\_care\\_industry](http://www.uniforvotes.ca/health_care_industry)) with friends and families.

## Local 27 leads with hospital workers' information picket in London



Unifor Local 27 members from London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) and St. Joseph's Health Care London (SJHC) held an information picket at the corner of Commissioners Rd and Wellington Rd in London on September 15, 2015.

Staffing has been in crisis in both hospitals with unprecedented overtime

and tremendous challenges for staff to get time off approved. Both hospitals have displayed disrespect for the collective agreements and refused to resolve problems through the grievance procedure, forcing issues to arbitration on a regular basis.

Further budget cuts being announced for the next fiscal year will mean members losing jobs as well those remaining being asked to do more with less, even though members are already stretched to the max. "The program budgets have been depleted due to the mismanagement of staffing, making this information picket absolutely necessary", said Ann Marie Tulett, Vice President Health Care for Local 27. Tulett also

recognized the efforts of the hospitals' unit chairs Michelle Flewin (SJHC) and Sarah O'Melia Muylaert (LHSC) for their determination and conviction over a very long and difficult summer dealing with hospital management. The Local is hoping to begin an organizing campaign for non-union employees at the hospitals this fall.

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# Unifor gathers at Canadian Council

Unifor's second Canadian Council filled the main hall at the beautiful Palais des Congrès in Montreal. The energy of the nearly 1,200 delegates and staff was evident throughout the weekend with members speaking passionately about the importance of the upcoming federal election.

"We talked about the challenges we face as a labour movement, but we also had so many moments where we celebrated our victories," said Unifor National President Jerry Dias. "We've had historic organizing successes and we've changed people's lives through bargaining better agreements. Our next big challenge is to make sure we have a new Prime Minister on October 19!"



The role of women activists was also highlighted with a panel on women in electoral politics. NDP Members of Parliament Ruth Ellen Brosseau and Peggy Nash, and Equal Voice Executive Director Nancy Peckford spoke about the need for women to put themselves on the ballot.

Check out Unifor's 'Hope Into Action - Part 1' at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdEQc8lpAC8> for the inspiring account of Unifor health sector activists whose efforts and struggles made their communities and their union stronger and better.

The Unifor Health Care Council met in advance of Canada Council and held elections for two vacant Executive positions, with Gloria Hendricks, Local 504 in Hamilton being acclaimed as Recording Secretary and Angela Downey, Local 4606 in Halifax being acclaimed as Member at Large.

Members attending the Health Care Council heard a passionate plea from former CAW National president Ken Lewenza to fight not just for our patients, residents or clients everyday through the care we provide, but also to advocate publicly as front line health care workers for progressive change. Health Care Council president Shawn Rouse said, "Although there are so many issues that we are facing every day, working short, scope of practice for RPNs, lack of benefits for part timers, dignity and respect for the work that's done with care and compassion each and every day, we need to vote next month for candidates committed to excellent public health care."

## Health Action Assembly and Conference 2015 in Toronto

**ASSEMBLY** - Saturday, November 21, 10a.m. - 4:30p.m.  
Church of the Holy Trinity - 10 Trinity Square (Eaton Centre)

**CONFERENCE** - Sunday, November 22, 9a.m. - 1p.m.  
Metro Hall - Rooms 308/309, 55 John St., Toronto

Guest Speakers include Miriam Laugesen; a policy expert on democratic reform in hospitals from New Zealand; Dr. Ray Dawes, a family doctor and advocate for rural health care and former chair of the Ontario Medical Association's rural practice section and the legendary Harry Leslie Smith; a 92-year old activist, campaigner and YouTube sensation for his eloquent defense of public health care. Sign up for this vital annual event as soon as possible.

## HEALTHCARE FOR ALL

Your vote is powerful—  
in this Federal Election  
use your vote to defend  
and expand public health  
care in Canada.

Congratulations to the Canadian Health Coalition for the exciting website launch of [healthcareforall.ca](http://healthcareforall.ca) this month! Please visit, share, and help get the word out! [Healthcareforall.ca](http://Healthcareforall.ca) contains shareable and printable resources on the status of health care in Canada, as well as how to improve it and concrete ways for you to take action. Check it out today!





## Local 302 hosts annual Executive Conference

Under the banner, “Building Activism” Local 302 held an Executive Conference on September 18 and 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at the Ramada Inn in London.

Local 302 president and National Executive Board member Nancy McMurphy said, “This was an incredible opportunity for Local 302 workplace leadership to share experiences and ideas on activism. Although the immediate focus was defeating the Harper Conservatives, on a larger scale the conference stressed the need for Union, community and political activism through engagement and solidarity in building our Union.”

## Most recent Unifor hospital settlement ratified:

Since our last issue, Unifor members have ratified settlements with:

- Woodstock General Hospital (clerical) and Local 636
- Norfolk General Hospital and Local 302
- Tillsonburg Memorial Hospital and Local 302
- Hotel Dieu Grace Hospital (Service Unit) and Local 2458
- Leamington Memorial Hospital (Service Unit) and Local 2458
- Leamington Memorial Hospital (Reg. Tech. Unit) and Local 2458
- Grand River Hospital and Local 1106
- Alexandra Hospital and Local 302

## Most recent Unifor long-term care settlement ratified:

Since our last issue, Unifor members have ratified settlements with:

- Local 8300 and Helen Henderson
- Local 302 and Chartwell Chateau Gardens Parkhill

# NS government continues its attack on public sector

**After 18 months of tensions and attacks on public sector workers and their unions, the Nova Scotia government recently laid out another edict.**

In a meeting in August with unions representing public sector workers in Nova Scotia, the Finance Minister Randy Delorey laid down the next step in his government’s curtailment of workers’ rights. Delorey announced what he called “a new approach” to collective bargaining where there will be no money for public sector workers for the next five years and put the unions on notice that public sector employers will be demanding five-year collective agreements. He later clarified in a news release, that he was not proposing wage freezes, but wanted unions to find “savings” within their collective agreements.

Atlantic Regional Director Lana Payne states that the government continues to demonstrate a lack of respect for the collective bargaining process by

setting conditions prior to bargaining. “These kinds of edicts often result in conflict and upheaval.”

“The people of Nova Scotia deserve strong public services; this kind of austerity plan will erode those very services that we depend on in our daily lives,” said Payne. “If we want to get serious about rebuilding our economy, we have to have more creative strategies than taking money out of the pockets of our hard-working health care workers and teachers.”

In addition, the four unions involved on the health care bargaining councils for nursing, health care, service support and clerical workers (Unifor, NSGEU, CUPE and NSNU) continue to meet regularly to prepare for bargaining. The first big task is reviewing all 49 collective agreements in the acute care sector and then to negotiate which employees are ‘essential’ as a result the government’s legislation. “We expect there will be a lot of disagreement



with the employer over who should be considered essential in order to provide emergency services during a legal strike or lockout,” said Payne.

“Our goal is to protect the benefits, rights and working conditions of our members”, said Payne. “I know this is a frustrating process for our members, but the many pieces of government legislation have changed how we traditionally bargain. I am positive about the four unions working together. If we have a chance of pushing back against this heavy legislative attack on workers, it will be through our willingness to work together.”



## Unifor rallies for a seniors' strategy in Windsor



Unifor and the Windsor Health Coalition mobilized more than 3,500 residents to a rally at the Ciociaro Club in Windsor that was an overflowing success. The August 26<sup>th</sup> rally in support of a seniors' health strategy and in

defense of universal, publicly funded health care helped set the election campaign tone.

Guest speakers included Unifor National President Jerry Dias; Dr. Ryan Meili from the Canadian Doctors of Medicare; Natalie Mehra from the Ontario Health Coalition; former CAW national president, Ken Lewenza. Dias made no apologies for criticisms of Ottawa's diminishing role in health care, saying "It's hard to talk about health care without talking politics. "It's all about

choices. The type of health care we have in this country will be a choice of government and we've seen what's happened for the last nine or 10 years under this government."

Dias stressed how much the federal government intends to decrease its share of health-care funding, which once accounted for 50 per cent of the country's total bill. But new funding formulas could reduce health-care transfer payments to less than 10 per cent of the overall costs over the coming decades.

## Unifor Women's Conference a fabulous success



Sisters from the health care sector joined an exciting and inspiring Unifor's Women's Conference under the banner: Women's Voices, Women's Power that brought together more than 300 women from across Unifor to discuss, learn and strategize about how to build on women's activism, collective bargaining strength and position in the union and in politics.

Congratulations to the Women's Department for another fabulous conference – held August 30 to September 2, at the Unifor Family Education Centre - in building the capacity of women activists through union education, activism and mobilization.

Not sure which federal candidate to support in your riding? Check out **Votetogether.ca**; a one-stop shop jam-packed with all the tools, actions and riding-specific information you'll need to end ten years of Harper rule and move Canada forward on October 19, 2015.

### Members rally behind Local 302 at Dearness in London

A strong contingent of Unifor Local 302 members rallied with a two-hour information picket on July 27<sup>th</sup> at Dearness Home, the municipal home for the aged in the City of London managed by Extendicare. The members stood in support of their union committee to and the pattern of disrespect displayed by the Home



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