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Health Accord postcard campaign launches in Nova Scotia



The Unifor Health Accord postcard campaign received a tremendous “East Coast” launch by regional and local leadership and activists. Unifor is determined to strongly defend our public health care system - providing high-quality care for every Canadian, regardless of their income level or where they live.

A stronger role for the federal government through a new Health Accord is critical to ensuring health care workers are recognized for their compassion and care. Our ‘Stronger Public Health Care. It’s Time’ campaign was launched to coincide with a Nova Scotia leadership update meeting on March 31st involving the Unifor acute care bargaining committees, national staff representative and the Atlantic Regional Director Lana Payne and Deb Tveit, Assistant to the President, pictured above.

The health care leadership meeting also provided an update on negotiations around the essential services agreement - a completely new process for healthcare workers in Nova Scotia who previously had the ability to strike like any other worker. As a result of the MacNeil government’s implementation of Bill 1 and Bill 37, health care workers are now limited in terms of their right to strike and must negotiate on a province-wide basis.

All the four unions (NS nurses’ association; NSGEU, CUPE and Unifor) representing health care workers are working together to negotiate one merged provincial collective agreement for each provincial bargaining unit. Susan Gill, former Local 4600 President and recently assigned to national staff temporarily to support the intensive process said, “This bargaining process has been a larger task than I think any of us anticipated as each union moves forward with each of our members’ best interests at heart. There has been great progress made from the Union side, but not sure I expect the same cooperation when we meet with the employer to begin the actual bargaining”.

Pictured above at the campaign launch are Carol Strong 4600, Susan Taylor, Linda MacNeil, Darlene Carrigan 4603, Christina Ashe 4606, Carla Bryden, Jimmy Callaghan 4603, Brian Moore 4603, Denise Gourley 4606, and in the back row, Jamie Pollock 4600, Susan Gill, Shauna Wilcox 4600, Bill Stillman 4606, Tanya Dugas 4606 and Jim Mott.

A Big Welcome to New Unifor Members

Congratulations and a big warm welcome to 55 healthcare workers at Highview Speciality Care in London. The workers voted 77% to join Unifor recently at this licensed retirement home with 48-bed secure unit providing care for people with early to mid-stage Alzheimer's Disease, related dementia and aging issues.

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Health Accord campaign reaches full stride

With plans for a major launch at the Prairie Regional Council, the Unifor 'Health Accord' now hits full stride. Regional coordinators including Shauna Wilcox from Local 4600; Nancy Brissett from Local 1106 and Jim Kennedy from Local 27 in the health sector are moving into place to give the campaign a real tangible presence in critical regions across Canada. The goal of the campaign is to deliver 100,000 signed postcards to the Federal Minister of Health prior to the next scheduled First Minister's meeting in July.

Cards should be delivered to the Unifor National Office not later than June 30, 2016. Have you taken action yet - for more petition cards to circulate amongst your family, friends or community, contact healthcare@unifor.org or call at 1-800-268-5763. To obtain more information including a Backgrounder to the issues raised by the campaign, check out www.unifor.org/healthaccord.

Unifor sends Equal Pay Day message

Tuesday April 19 was observed in red across Ontario as Equal Pay Day. Unifor leaders, locals and activists all took action on women's equality to help send a united message about women's equality - it's time for equal pay and services that support working women.

Equal Pay Day represents the additional work that, on average, women need to do to make the same amount as men made by December 31 of the previous year. An extra three and a half months! Unifor is calling for Active intervention by governments and business to change systemic practices that perpetuate women's economic inequality and poverty. But closing the gender wage gap is more than just equal pay at work. It is also about ensuring adequate funding for public services like a national child care or long-term care program that support working women as care givers.

Thanks to all those in Unifor that wore your red on the day (even if you often, if not always wear red).



Members at Northern Youth Centre Unanimously Approve New Deal

A new two-year contract for 16 workers has been unanimously ratified by members in Kenora and Dryden with the Northern Youth Centre. The Centre operates an open custody youth facility in Kenora and also provides youth outreach services in both Dryden and Kenora.

The contract provides a two-per cent wage increase in the first year, a 1 1/2-per cent wage increase in the second year, improved vacation pay, new premium pay for Remembrance Day, a new \$100 annual clothing allowance and key improvements in contract language.

Unifor National Representative Stephen Boon said, "Unifor Local 324-229 members in Kenora and Dryden were pleased to secure solid wage increases and key improvements especially in a sector that is facing an ongoing shortfall in provincial funding levels."



On April 28, we paid tribute to fallen workers

by participating in local Day of Mourning commemorations. The Day of Mourning was also an occasion to remind federal MPs that safe work is a right, not a privilege, with a call on all

politicians to implement a comprehensive ban on asbestos so we can all breathe easier. Check here for the National Day of Mourning and other recent Unifor Statements:

National Day of Mourning:

<http://www.unifor.org/en/whats-new/briefs-statements/national-day-mourning>

International Day for the Elimination of Racism:

<http://www.unifor.org/en/whats-new/briefs-statements/international-day-elimination-racial-discrimination>

International Women's Day:

<http://www.unifor.org/en/whats-new/briefs-statements/march-international-womens-day-2016>

Paramedics rally at Thunder Bay city hall; then ratify deal

Paramedics with Unifor Local 229 and their supporters gathered outside of City Hall on April 11, 2016 in support of a fair deal paramedics in Thunder Bay. The paramedics had earlier voted unanimously in favour of a strike mandate and were sending a strong and clear message to Thunder Bay city council and administration that they stood 100% behind their bargaining committee and Local leadership.

Andy Savela, the National Staff Representative assigned was quoted by the local media demanding recognition and parity for the challenging work they perform: "We're just hoping to get recognized along with other first responders in our city and other first responders across the province." "The workers are seeking recognition that Thunder Bay paramedics had significant call volumes; medical protocols and utilization in the province but are among the lowest paid" said Savela.

The paramedics employed by Superior North EMS had been working without a contract for a year and would have been in a legal strike position of April 28th. Under the Ambulance Services Collective Bargaining Act, these paramedics are deemed to provide an essential service, and required an essential services agreement to ensure there is emergency service coverage in place.

Kari Jefford, Local 229 President spoke to the efforts to achieve a fair settlement for paramedics; "In this round of bargaining it became evident that the members were united. After more than a year, we reached a settlement of 12% increases with no concessions. This deal brings our paramedics who have the highest protocols and highest call



Paramedics rally in Thunder Bay

volumes in the province, yet were some of the lowest paid, to the top 10% of Ontario paramedic wages.

The membership in turn voted overwhelming at 91% in favour of the deal at the ratification meeting. After the meeting Jefford said "This deal could not have been achieved without the significant fightback campaign headed by Unifor Local 229. With a 100% strike mandate, we hit the streets, lobbied the municipal Councillors and had the full support of the public behind us resulting in a deal that sent us from the bottom to the top in one contract". "The work and dedication of the bargaining committee will set the precedence within the province of Ontario in wage enhancements for years to come" said Jefford.

The settlement provides for a total increase of 12% in wages with full retroactivity and an expiry date in 2020, as well as increased paramedical coverage, including chiro, physio and massage and a vision care increase to \$300.

Paramedic fundraises for ambulance for Nicaragua



Paramedic Jennifer Cripton

Well on her way in just the last three weeks to reaching the goal of raising \$12,000 in donations, a paramedic with the Elgin Medavie EMS Jennifer Cripton is moving closer to announcing the donation of an ambulance vehicle to be sent down to Nicaragua next fall. Paramedics in Nicaragua are all volunteers with disintegrating gear and vehicles that in some cases are over 20 years old and rarely start.

Cripton said she was compelled to act after visiting the city of El Viejo. "They have one ambulance for 125,000 people and it barely ever starts. You need to push-start it," Cripton said in a London Free Press story on her efforts. "They don't have any equipment, other than gloves

that are donated. They don't carry medicines. They mostly deal with trauma," she said, contrasting that experience with her working conditions in St. Thomas.

Cripton intends to purchase one of the trade-in ambulances from her EMS to drive down next fall with a caravan of fire trucks also being donated to the people of Nicaragua. Please help if you can and spread the word! For more information or to donate:

<https://www.gofundme.com/szcnstks>

Unifor supports women's community services with IWD donations



Photo courtesy of the Windsor Star

On April 13, 2016, activists from UNIFOR Local 444 presented \$2,000 donations to the Welcome Centre for Women and the House of Sophrosyne in Windsor. The donations were part of almost \$150,000 donated by Unifor to women's shelters across the country to ensure women receive these crucial services in recognition of International Women's Day.

"The needs of women escaping violence or seeking equality across Canada remain great," said Unifor national president Jerry Dias in a Unifor statement on International Women's Day. "This donation is made in recognition of the incredible work the staff at these facilities do on a daily basis on behalf of the women in their community."

Dias said Unifor, the largest private sector union in Canada, has been dedicated to equality since its origin in 2013 and is governed by a national executive board structured to reflect gender balance.

Take Action - Health Workers are not targets

It's time we stood together and call for an end to the bombing of health structures and humanitarian workers. Join with the Medecins Sans Frontieres/Doctors Without Borders movement, and help by participating in their #NotATarget social media campaign.

- Use the hashtag [#NotATarget](#) on Facebook and Twitter
- Take a selfie with the [#NotATarget](#) logo
- Change your profile photo with one of our [#NotATarget](#) images
- Share our [#NotATarget](#) video
- Challenge two friends, family members or colleagues to take action

Earlier this year a MSF hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, was attacked and destroyed by the US military. Just this month, an MSF-supported hospital in Aleppo, Syria, was hit by airstrikes, killing patients and staff. This must end. Thank you for standing in solidarity with innocent civilians and humanitarian aid workers around the world and supporting the MSF!



Glazier Medical Clinic Workers Ratify New Agreement

Unifor members at the Glazier Medical Clinic providing primary health care services in the community of Oshawa voted in strong support of a new 3-year collective agreement. The agreement provides language improvements in layoff, bereavement and vacation as well as increases in bereavement leave, health and welfare benefits, pension benefits, and wages. The negotiation committee included Chairperson Kaie Taylor, and Committee persons, Josee Blanchet, Deborah Grotke supported by Derek Spence, Local 1136 President and National Representative Kelly-Anne Orr.



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