

Action Memo

Date: September 12, 2008

To: All Local Presidents/Highest Ranking Officers in the Health Care Division

From: Warren (Smokey) Thomas, President
Jill McIllwraith, Chair, Health Care Divisional Council (HCDC)

Re: Campaign on Workplace Violence

Violence in the workplace is a major hazard for OPSEU's 30,000 health care workers across Ontario. Our workplaces are ranked among the highest for risk of violence by the Ministry of Labour.

Risk is greater for jobs that involve those who

- work with unstable or volatile people,
- have public or community contact,
- work alone
- work at night or very early in the morning.
- handle cash,
- protect or secure valuables,
- transport people and goods,
- work in a mobile workplace

These factors exist in all our health care sectors.

The Health Care Divisional Council is made up of the chairs from seven sectors: Ambulance, Long Term Care, Hospital Professionals, Health Care Support, Community Health Care Professionals, Mental Health and Canadian Blood Services and Diagnostics.

Today we are launching a campaign on workplace violence – starting with workshops that our members have been asking for. These workshops build on the HCDC's work to pressure employers and government to take meaningful steps in reducing workplace violence, including this spring's lobby at Queen's Park. The campaign will provide participants with training to improve violence prevention measures and procedures in their own workplaces.

To begin this campaign, we will hold regional workshops between November 2008 and January 2009. The workshops will have the following elements:

- Sharing our experience of violence and reflecting on risk factors, hazards and systemic issues that contribute to it;
- Learning how to use and enforce our rights under the OHS Act to mobilize in our workplaces to challenge workplace violence;

- Practicing writing effective recommendations as Joint Health and Safety Committees members and worker Health and Safety Representatives; and
- Developing effective strategies to get action from employers and the provincial government on workplace violence.

Each HCDC bargaining unit will be asked to send two member participants. For bargaining units that are larger than 300 members, the OPSEU convention formula (13.4 (a) of the OPSEU constitution) shall be used. Also, Sector Executive Members are entitled to attend over and above their bargaining unit entitlements. We suggest one come from the local executive committee (LEC), the other from the Joint Health & Safety Committee (JHSC) or worker health & safety representative.

The dates and locations are as follows:

<p>Region 1-Thursday January 8, 2009 Location: London Regional Office</p> <p>Region 2-Tuesday November 25, 2008 Location: TBA</p> <p>Region 3-Thursday November 20, 2008 Location: TBA</p> <p>Region 4-Thursday January 15, 2009 Location: TBA</p>	<p>Region 5- Wednesday November 12, 2008 Location: TBA</p> <p>Region 6-Thursday December 4, 2008 Location: Sudbury Regional Office</p> <p>Region 7-Friday November 7, 2008 Location: TBA</p>
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Mark your calendars! We will be sending you more information in the near future. If you have any questions please contact Campaigns Officer Martha Josephian at 1-800-268-7376 ext. 8203 or by fax at 416-443-1762.

The Health Care Divisional Council has the full support of the OPSEU Executive Board on this project. We look forward to working with you on this important campaign.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

In Solidarity,

Warren (Smokey) Thomas
President

Jill McIlwraith
Chair, Health Care Divisional Council

cc. OPSEU Executive Board, Health Care Divisional Council, Local Service Representatives, BPS Supervisor

