



## Action Memo

To: Highest ranking in Long-term Care bargaining units

From: Warren (Smokey) Thomas, President  
Joan White, Chair Long-term Care sector

Date: November 28, 2009

**Re: Health and Safety Survey for Long-Term Care Highest ranking member and Joint Health and Safety committee (JHSC) members**

Dear sisters and brothers:

We are writing to request that the highest ranking Long-Term Care LEC member and all worker members of your Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) complete this survey and return it to OPSEU's Health and Safety Unit.

JHSCs are the backbone of health and safety in the workplace. Strong union and health and safety activists are critical in our union's work to improve the health and safety of OPSEU members. JHSCs must function effectively to truly reduce injuries, fatalities and incidents of occupational disease. For progress to be made, workers' ideas need to be welcomed and incorporated into health and safety plans in the workplace.

OPSEU members in long term care face many hazards on the job that make improving health and safety important. LTC workers suffer from strains, back and other ergonomic injuries, infectious diseases, equipment and chemical hazards, and workplace violence to name a few. This survey will help us gather information to assess how we can help and what tools you need to be as effective as possible on your JHSC.

According to Ontario Safety Association for Community and Healthcare (OSACH), by 2031 Canada will manage the health problems of 9.3 million seniors. OPSEU members know that their workload is getting heavier. We also know that people need our services earlier and for much longer. We see cognitive illnesses occurring more often with dementia increasing within the client population. It is critical that JHSCs in this sector function effectively as we strive to provide caring service and expertise in this changing landscape.

We are lucky to have the assistance of the Toronto clinic locations of the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW) in this project. OHCOW's interdisciplinary team of occupational nurses, physicians, ergonomists, and hygienists bring current research and experience into workplaces to help prevent injuries and occupational disease. OHCOW, as an active partner in this project, will use their expertise to assist us in identifying and developing tools for OPSEU LTC members to improve health and safety in their workplaces.

Survey Action plan:

1. Surveys will be announced to highest ranking bargaining unit members for OPSEU locals attending the 2009 BPS conference
2. Surveys will be available on the OPSEU website to be filled out by **the highest ranking bargaining unit member and by all worker members of the joint health and safety committee.**
3. All surveys should be completed online or hard copies returned to the OPSEU Health and Safety Unit, c/o 100 Lesmill Road, Toronto, M3B 3P8 by Friday, January 29, 2010.
4. Results will be summarized and described with recommendations in a report that will be provided to the Long-term Care sector.
5. The report and recommendations will be used to guide development of tools and strategies to improve health and safety in LTC workplaces.

Please reinforce the importance of this project with your JHSC members and encourage them to participate by completing and returning the survey by Friday, January 29, 2010.

In Solidarity,

Smokey Thomas,  
President, OPSEU

Joan White  
Chair, Long-Term Care Sector Executive

WST/lt

cc: Alec Farquhar, OHCOW