

Cadogan Chatline



April 18, 2007

« Honour in Battle »

Sector 8 Long Term Care and Related Facilities

New and improved long-term care act on the way

For months the government has dangled a carrot in front of the nose of those in long term care: the promise of a new and improved long term care act. We hoped this new act would ensure residents in our care would receive better services, including legislating increased time for the care of each resident.

Initially there were few signs of the government's commitment to setting standard hours of care, but with lobbying by the Ontario Health Coalition and the labour movement, changes may be coming.

Activists are campaigning for 3.5 hours of care per resident per day. The ever-increasing number of residents in our facilities and the continuous decrease in staff levels are forcing us to provide care that better resembles a fast food outlet. Three minutes of bathroom assistance, two minutes to get dressed and three minutes to get down to the dining room. On to the next resident. These individuals have lives. They want to share, they want to talk, and they want to be included in what is happening to them. Happy residents are healthy residents, leading to reduced workload for staff, and fewer sick hours.

BPS Conference coming in June



OPSEU Broader Public Sector chairs meet at the Toronto Regional office to plan strategy for future campaigns and the conference in June.

The BPS Conference is scheduled for June 1-2 2007.

The LTC division executive met with Lisa McCaskell, OPSEU's health and safety officer, to plan for a sector 8 Health and Safety II course for this year's conference.

For those not at BPS 2005, we are developing a mini-version of Health and Safety I to allow us all to participate in course II.

The Health Care Puzzle

Brother Rick Janson, OPSEU staff campaign officer is very busy gathering information on the ever-changing health care field. OPSEU has developed an informative seminar that hit the road last fall. The seminar ranges from P3s to LHINs. New legislative changes are also explored and made relevant to the participants. A notice was sent out to all health care sectors inviting members to hold an information session with Rick.

Using PowerPoint and handouts, participants only need a willingness to try and understand the often inexplicable realities behind the government's plans. The executive of the long term care sector were lucky enough to have Rick fit us into his busy schedule for a forty-five mini-presentation at our November meeting. We were given an overview on some of the costs involved with the government changes, the effects they could have on our workplaces and more importantly how those we work for will be affected. The information session also encourages members to put forth ideas on how what direction OPSEU could take to evoke changes to government thinking. If your local or unit would be interested in hosting this please contact Rick at:

rjanson@opseu.org

1-800-268-7376

Contracts

On any given day in any given month one of our Long Term Care units is in talks with their employer. Contract talks seem to be an ongoing drudgery that has no ending. It can be a thankless task for those who unwittingly accept the challenge of bargaining for their members: the role of negotiator can seem a no-win situation – employers / management are saying NO to what you are asking

for and co-workers are expecting significant gains. Hang tough and fight the good fight!

The Long Term Care Executive is asking for input from those who have been in the hot seat and from others who felt they were not being listened to. Money is always on the top of the list of demands, but we should also prioritize demands that contribute to improved health and safety. With dwindling dollars and more and more requests from management (or demands, it sometimes feels) we the workers are getting the job done – but at a cost to our well-being. We are not in the health care field for the money. We are mostly individuals who enjoy working with others and want to help better the living conditions of our residents. If you have any good ideas to contribute, suggestions, or contract language – forward them. We will compile and share them with your colleagues. Money is important but the quality of life you share with your own family is of a much bigger consideration!

Health and Safety

On Nov. 29, 2006 OPSEU staff health and safety officer Lisa McCaskell met with the Long Term Care executive to give us an update on OPSEU's involvement with Ontario's pandemic plan. Labour has taken a strong stance on supporting the provision of N95 masks for all front line health care workers as one means to deter the spread of the H5N1 virus -- better known as the avian flu. For more information on this topic please visit

www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/emu/pan_flu_flu_plan.html

The Ministry of Labour has recently created a provincial health and safety committee specifically for the health care field. As OPSEU's representative, Lisa will be our voice to bring forward issues and develop solutions around such issues as

violence in the workplace, ergonomics, infectious diseases and sharps.

An update on sharps – Nov. 16, 2006 saw second reading of Bill 30 -- Shelley Martel's initiative to legislate mandatory use of safety engineered sharps. These devices include needles that retract after use. Having gone to the committee for further consideration, it is now up to you to get involved to help push this bill into law.

Lobby your MPP, fax/write/email the clerk of the standing committee on regulations and private bills to show your support!

Long-term care, Long-term goals

The executive of Sector 8 met in Toronto on Sept. 26 and 27, 2006. Our priority continues to be getting information out to members and bringing them closer together to share ideas and suggestions. Having had several compliments on our Sector Newsletter, it was decided to continue mailing it out with the FYIs. As part of our work to build the sector and better communicate with members, it has been proposed that the sector sponsor the attendance of the communications coordinator at the Nov. 2006 Editor's Weekend.

Meet and Greet!

Our members work in all areas of the province. In order to ensure that the executive is kept up-to-date with your concerns, we are considering moving the four annual executive meetings around the province. By holding these meetings in various cities and towns, we hope that members in Sector 8 will be more likely to participate by voicing their ideas and suggestions. Also, by possibly inviting members to the executive meetings, we may take away some of the fear of future

involved as a member of the executive. If you think this is a good idea, please forward your support to any member of the executive or to sector negotiator Mark Kotanen at mkotanen@opseu.org

Retirement Homes Act

Change one – change them all. There is some indication that with the passing of Bill 140, the Long Term Care Act, revision of the retirement homes act is likely not too far behind. Retirement homes are often seen as housing individuals who require little to no assistance. Residents here are more than capable of caring for themselves, but want to be a part of a larger “family,” missing the contact of others when they live on their own. Unfortunately this picture is changing with the increasing demand of healthcare services.

The lack of staffing, the lack of bed availability and the lack of funds in the public sector are seeing more and longer term care residents being placed by families into retirement home settings. Physically, emotionally or mentally unable to oversee their own day-to-day care, or unable to assume responsibility for monitoring their own medication intake, younger individuals are taking up residence in retirement home settings.

With far fewer regulations to govern them, many retirement homes only adhere to the basic requirements expected. In many cases, staff have only minimal education to deal with the physical and mental needs of residents in their care. In some cases there is need for staff to be educated in the area of pharmacology to dispense medications. Retirement home staff

is often being required to carry out the same workloads as those in long term care facilities, but with far less pay and training.

No matter what the facility, training and education needs to be in line with the work and the needs of the clientele. A standard needs to be set for all homes.

Organizing

Connie Huziak, OPSEU organizing representative, updated us on the newest workplaces to join our sector. I welcome and hope to see these members at future functions. How units are organized and how we can help was discussed. If you know a worksite that is not unionized and you think are interested in joining OPSEU, please forward a contact name and number to the union.

It is the members who initiate change and as “workers in the trenches” you are the best judge of how or if the changes proposed will make an improvement to the care of our seniors.

Debbie MacDonald

Chair – Sector 8

Long Term Care Survey

Included with this issue of the Cadogan Chatline please find a workplace survey. Get involved and let us know what is going on in your workplace. Your executive cannot help develop training if we do not know what challenges you are facing -- not only from managers -- but from your general work routine. Let us know the bad, the ugly but please share the good. Tell us how your co-workers help make your work day a better one. A unit luncheon, after-hours get-together or employee appreciation days – what do you do as a team to help each other out?

Take a few minutes to fill out the survey, forward it to your stewards, and stewards, please in turn forward the surveys to the regional offices.

How to Find Us

In a day and age of CD players and cellular phones it is easy to forget that there are still some of us out there who, because of work and family obligations, have not been able to find the time to learn our way around the “web.” For those of you, who like myself, have to go to the kids for help with getting on the worldwide web, the following steps might help your trip to find us a little easier.

1. On your home page you will find near the top a white bar called the “address bar.” Move your pointer to this bar, left click on your mouse and type www.opseu.org
2. The above step should take you to the OPSEU homepage. Near the top of the homepage you will find listed in black bars the different divisions of OPSEU. Please move your pointer to Health Care and again left click your mouse.
3. Once at the Health Care title a listing of the different sectors within this division. Please move your pointer to the Long Term Care title and click.
4. Once at the Long Term Care site move your pointer to the information you wish to learn more about, left click and you’re on your way.
5. At the top of your computer screen there should be a green “button” that says Back. Point and left click to go back to the previous screens.

Chair's Report

The last executive meeting for 2006 took place Nov. 28 and 29.

Members of the executive reviewed their work plan for 2006, satisfied that they are on target to complete their goals.

One completed project is the scanning of the sector's history to CD. Not only is this a great way to reduce the clutter of binders and paper, it was a great initiative to support OPSEU's commitment at Convention 2006 to help make our world a greener place to live.

Goodbye

Where have the last two years gone? It seems we just got started and here we are again getting ready for the BPS conference in June. With the conference comes the election for our division. All positions are up for grabs.

I want to thank my executive for all their hard work, dedication and all the extra work they accepted over the past two years – I delegate a lot. They are the driving force of this sector and have been invaluable to me.

In the last year Sector 8 said goodbye to Ruth Hamilton as our sector negotiator and hello to Mark Kotanen as her replacement. Ruth was an invaluable source of support for our sector and I am sure Mark will provide the same service and support to our sector.

While the past two years has busied us with an overwhelming amount of learning in the area of LHINs and the new LTC Act, we were also able to attend a pilot course for organizing newer units and participate in OPSEU's commitment to a "greener world" by compiling our sector history onto CDs. The next two years will see the incoming executive deal with pending changes

to the retirement homes act and a campaign for standards of care commitment from the government of Ontario.

The emotional part!

After 16 years as a strong activist I am retiring from the sector and taking a break from the business of OPSEU. The years seem to have flown by. I remember the day we became our own sector. I remember writing our first set of by-laws and struggling to ensure our sector remained productive and viable. I remember the battles, the pickets and the presentations to the various government levels. I recall our first sector newsletter and see how it has grown. It's hard to list all the people I met and the things that I learned. Having held the chair is where I truly came to appreciate the frustrations, the battles, the friendships, the support and all the hard work that goes into fighting for what you believe in.

I know I leave the sector in good shape as your executive members have proven how dedicated, hard working and willing they are to present fresh ideas to move our sector forward. I will look forward to reading the Cadogan Chatline and keeping informed with the direction our sector is taking. I am always an email away for those who want to keep in touch.

I want to thank you for the honour and privilege of being part of the executive and serving as chair for so many years. I take with me knowledge and friendship that will last a lifetime. My advice to the new executive: fight for the rights of those you represent, you have been entrusted with something precious and laugh once in a while when you feel down, there is light at the end of the fight.



Debbie MacDonald, Sector 8 Chair

Contact us

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**LONG TERM CARE
SECTOR 8
2006 – 2007 MEMBERSHIP SURVEY**

NAME (optional) _____

**WORKPLACE
ADDRESS** _____

**JOB TITLE /
JOB DESCRIPTION**

PART TIME _____ **Full Time** _____

YEARS OF EMPLOYMENT _____

TYPE OF FACILITY (please circle)

Nursing Home **Long Term Care Home** **Independent Living**

NUMBER OF RESIDENTS / CLIENTS _____

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES _____

4 PROBLEMS YOU SEE WITHIN YOUR WORKPLACE

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

4 POSITIVES ABOUT YOUR WORKPLACE

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

4 IMPROVEMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE IN YOUR NEXT CONTRACT

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

3 IDEAS FOR THE LONG TERM CARE SECTOR WITH REGARDS TO THE INFORMATION YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE FORWARDED

COMMENTS

THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR PARTICITPATION. IT IS YOU INPUT THAT DETERMINES WHICH PATH THE LONG TERM CARE SECTOR TAKES!