

dialogue

April 26, 2007

A bi-weekly update on issues affecting health care in Ontario

**Nursing Graduate Guarantee
HealthForceOntario**
www.healthforceontario.ca

Nursing grad guarantee begins

Locals need to meet with HR departments to ensure program respects collective agreements

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The McGuinty government's one-time job guarantee for nursing graduates begins this month. While the program has benefits, it is important that locals meet with their human resources department regarding its implementation and remain vigilant in enforcing collective agreements.

All organizations that receive provincial funding for nursing services are eligible to apply for new six-month RN/RPN graduate positions -- including hospitals, long term care homes, home care, public health, primary health care, corrections and schools. These new positions must be over and above the normal staffing complement.

After an initial orientation period of three months, it is expected that the employer will, if suitable, hire the new graduate into a permanent full-time position as openings become available.

While the program is fully funded by the Ministry of Health, any graduate without a job after six months must be offered -- at the employer's expense -- another six weeks of employment.

The program is not intended to leap frog graduates into positions past more experienced nurses. The ministry's web site states: "new graduates will not be getting jobs over experienced nurse, but will have to compete with other nurses on staff for permanent positions once their orientation ends."

However, health care employers have incentive to fast track these graduate nurses

into permanent positions: if a graduate nurse is hired before the six-month period expires, the employer can use the leftover funding for a number of training-related purposes, including backfill of nurses who have taken leave for further education.

The positions are not intended to provide additional and immediate full-time support, but function as an orientation that will bridge candidates to full-time work. The Ministry has promised that standards for this orientation will be coming soon.

Locals will have some clout in enforcing their collective agreements -- 20 per cent of funding for these positions will be held back until a final report is submitted. That final report must have sign off by "any applicable RN/RPN collective bargaining representative."

Wage rates for these new positions have been set to a maximum of \$27.20/hour for RNs and \$20.60/hour for RPNs. If a collective agreement stipulates a rate higher than this amount, the employer would be responsible for the difference.

Program funding does not include the cost of nurse educators, coordinators or mentors.

Graduate nurses interested in the program need to register on the HealthForceOntario web site.

For more information, consult the HealthForceOntario web site (listed above).



Newly elected OPSEU leaders Smokey Thomas (President) and Patty Rout (1st Vice-President/Treasurer) spoke to the Ontario legislature's Standing Committee on Social Policy April 24. The committee was conducting hearings into Bill 171, the omnibus health care legislation introduced last December. (See dialogue 22)

Did you win?

HCDC Convention Raffle

The original Rick Janson oil painting was won by Marilou Martin.

Other prizes have yet to be claimed. Do you have the winning ticket?

Vintage OPSEU Jacket

Winning #: 0784396

Four Tickets to the May 29 Blue Jays game vs Yankees

Winning #: 0784628

Foot Care Package

Winning #: 0784577

\$584 was raised by the raffle to support the Ontario Health Coalition.

Winners should contact Rick Janson at head office to claim their prize.

Rally for Safe Needles
May 1 - 12 Noon at Queen's Park

