



# Developments ON THE LINE

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## Three agencies torpedo talks

### No agreement on back-to-work protocols

Negotiations this past weekend in three community living agencies were torpedoed by shortsighted employers who insisted on being able to discipline striking members for actions on the picket lines.

OPSEU negotiators were frustrated that they were unable to get agreement from employers on a routine back-to-work protocol including banning reprisals for actions during a strike.

"This is shocking ignorance of standard back-to-work protocols after a strike or lockout," said OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas.

Thomas will be in London for a news conference at 3:00 p.m. today.

"A strike is a strike, but retribution is not what is needed right now. We need to get people back to work with the people they support and care about - people who need our members."

Negotiations took place on the weekend between OPSEU and community living agency employers in Middlesex, London and Chatham-Kent.

### Employers must start putting people first

"These employers are forgetting that their job is to support vulnerable individuals -- they are going to have to grow up and start putting people first. Meanwhile I know all our striking members will stay strong on the lines."

Thomas said no union can put its members at risk by agreeing to allow them to be disciplined for events during a labour dispute. "People don't spend weeks on the line so they can be fired or suspended



OPSEU President Smokey Thomas, will meet with London-area media today for a news update. OPSEU file photo.

when they come back," he said.

Thomas said employers bringing in replacement workers from outside the community also made the strikes longer. "Shame on any employer that will hire a company that brings in scabs. These companies provoke workers because they have a vested interest in escalating and prolonging strikes."

About 1150 workers at community living agencies in London, Middlesex, Elgin, Chatham-Kent, Tillsonburg, and Meaford remain on strike. Workers at Community Living Prince Edward are now in a strike position, but in mediation, bringing the total to 1,300 workers on strike or in a strike position.

Negotiations are scheduled for Elgin and Tillsonburg units early this week.

**Produced by OPSEU Communications**

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