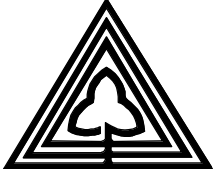


OPSEU



SEFPO

TAKE ACTION ON **COMMUNITY HEALTH!**

*A campaign bulletin for OPSEU members
working in community care*

December 7, 2000

Local 274 Update:

Members of Local 274 at the Hamilton-Wentworth CCAC are still on the picket line. They overwhelmingly rejected a proposed settlement brought to them by a mediator which still would not provide them parity with surrounding area CCACs.

According to an article in the November 30 issue of the Hamilton Spectator, *"the strike is believed to have contributed to Hamilton's clogged emergency rooms, which have been turning away ambulances more than ever before. For two days in October Hamilton's hospitals were so overcrowded they all closed their doors to ambulances for nearly 48 hours. Ontario's top expert on emergency room overcrowding described it as a "meltdown".*

Even Brad Clark, parliamentary assistant to Health Minister Elizabeth

Witmer, doesn't believe local hospitals when they say they are having no problem discharging patients.

"I've been advised by the hospitals that they're managing fine, but the statistics indicate something else is happening. The statistics don't lie. It's obvious it's impacting ambulances and the hospitals."

Local 274 president Pam Clark and OPSEU staff representative Gary Adams attempted to visit Elizabeth Witmer in her constituency office on November 24, but Witmer snuck out of her office.

In the legislature a day earlier, Dominic Agostino, MPP for Hamilton East said that the health system in Hamilton was in chaos. *"Last month, as a result of the strike, 41% of the time Hamilton hospitals were on critical care bypass... On average, discharges from hospital are two and a half*

days longer than they were the previous month. There's a clear correlation here between the CCAC strike, your lack of funding and our crisis."

He asked the minister to step in with the necessary funding to end the strike, and presented a petition to the legislature asking for a funding increase to bring pay and conditions for staff up to the level of other CCACs in the central-southwest region.

Witmer's response was that she doesn't get involved in labour disputes.

You can send messages of support to the strikers c/o griddle@sympatico.ca

**Donations and letters can be mailed to:
Local 274 Strike Headquarters,
584 Upper James Street,
Hamilton L9C 2Y6
phone (905) 318-0269 or
fax (905) 318-9706**

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

Long Term Care

Forums:

The Ontario Health Coalition is involved in planning forums on long term care, to be held during the month of February in the following communities:

Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Hamilton, Windsor, Ottawa and Kingston.

For further information on how your local can be involved, please contact Barb Linds at OPSEU Head Office extension 203.

Joshua Fleuelling

Inquest:

The jury in the Joshua Fleuelling inquest made a number of recommendations with respect to emergency room overcrowding and the health system. One of the recommendations relates to home care and managed competition:

"It is recognized that home care expansion is necessary to open hospital beds in order to relieve Emergency Department pressures. In order to attract nurses to the home care field there needs to be less disparity in the level of compensation and benefits with those who provide nursing services in hospitals. We recommend that the Ministry of Health

and Long Term Care revert the implementation of managed competition marked by a bidding process for service delivery in the home care sector."

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives:

The CCPA recently released a new study called "Unsafe Practices" which shows how the health care system is under threat from creeping privatization and public spending cuts.

A summary of this study can be found at www.policyalternatives.ca

You can also find a summary of another study called **Without Foundation: How Medicare is Undermined by Gaps and Privatization in Community and Continuing Care.**

Health Sciences Association of British Columbia sets bargaining demands:

The HSA (also a NUPGE affiliate) represents 10,000 health science professionals working in hospitals and in the community in B.C. At a bargaining conference held last month, they identified a wage increase as the top priority.

"After nearly a decade of wage controls, our members want a wage increase that

recognizes their education level, skills and experience, said Cindy Stewart, the unions's president. *"Many BC communities are facing a severe shortage of health science professionals and unless the government develops a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy, the problem will only get worse."*

This is the last issue of the bulletin to be mailed to Local Executive members.

To continue to receive this bulletin, send your e-mail address or your fax number to:

**Barbara Linds
416 443-8888
1 800 268-7376
extension 203
blinds@opseu.org**

**Our web page address:
www.opseu.org**

Please post this bulletin on your union bulletin board, and copy it for your colleagues.

Authorized for distribution:



Leah Casselman, President