

dialogue

August 9, 2007

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

Champlain CCAC chooses OPSEU amid hectic health care summer

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Champlain CCAC votes OPSEU

The 383 professional staff of the Champlain Community Care Access Centre chose OPSEU in a run-off representation vote. August 2. The vote resulted from merging CCACs to fit the new LHIN boundaries.

LHIN CEO named co-chair of EORLA Steering Committee

Following up on a secret report of a third party panel, the Eastern Ontario Regional Lab Association (EORLA) has established a steering committee to implement a service and delivery plan. The Steering committee includes representation from the EORLA board, the ministry of health, member hospitals and the Champlain LHIN. Co-Chairs will be Robert Cushman, CEO of the Champlain LHIN, and George Clarke from the Laboratories Branch of the Ministry of Health. Curiously, while there is significant LHIN involvement, the memo announcing the steering committee suggests that accountability agreements will be with the MOHLTC, and not with the LHIN. Hospitals are under the LHIN mandate, labs outside of hospitals are not.

Supervisors appointed for Scarborough, Alliston Hospitals

The ministry of health has appointed a supervisor for The Scarborough Hospital amid a battle over board governance. Fee-paying hospital members were upset last September when they were not allowed to elect new members to the hospital board. Ontario Superior Court Justice David Brown ruled the board had

“misconstrued its powers” to appoint annual members and amend hospital bylaws. Under a ministry appointee, it also opens up the facility to review by the Ontario Ombudsman, André Marin. Mark Rochon was appointed supervisor at Alliston's Stevenson Memorial Hospital after the board quit en masse June 8. A local citizens group is now advocating that senior management at the hospital do the same. The hospital has been battling the community and many front line staff since its surprise decision last year to end birthing in Alliston.

70 rally to save Hamilton lab collection sites

Hamilton St. Joseph's Healthcare called in members to issue layoff notices at exactly the same time their union brothers and sisters rallied across the street to save three lab collection sites. About 70 people came out to



1st VP Patty Rout in Hamilton.

support the labs. Speakers included OPSEU 1st VP Patty Rout, MPP Andrea Horwath, federal MPs Chris Charlton and David Christopherson, City Councillor Terry Whitehead., Local 206 President Betty Palmieri and Vice President Ed Zacharewski. The three lab sites are expected to be privatized after the hospital closes them October 31. The LHIN says the closure was decided between the hospital and the ministry of health as part of the annual planning submission — a process that also directly involved the LHIN. Instead of treating the closure as an “integration decision,” allowing for public consultation and disclosure, the LHIN has instead ignored its mandate, clinging to a questionable technicality.

Libs increase food allowance in long term care homes...

July 29 the government announced it was increasing the daily food allowance long term care residents receive. July 1 long term care homes received 11 cents per day more towards feeding residents three meals a day, plus beverages and snacks. That brought the total to \$5.57 per day – far short of what dieticians said was needed. By the end of the month the government returned with a new announcement – that by September homes would receive a raw food allowance of \$7 per day – the amount dieticians said was necessary.

But we're still waiting for staffing standards

Despite promises earlier this year that the government would bring in a regulation re-establishing staffing standards in long term care, such standards have yet to materialize. The *Toronto Star*, in a July 31 editorial, said “restoring a care standard and backing it up with adequate funding are crucial to improving the quality of life and dignity of seniors living in nursing homes...(Smitherman) should push ahead without delay and set a reasonable level of care that addresses the real needs of elderly residents.” The Liberals also announced it will give \$15.34 million per year to help rebuild old and cramped long term care homes.