



Health Care Links



A newsletter for OPSEU
stewards working in health care

Issue #3 March, 2002

OPSEU steps up fight for medicare

"Ontario stands as a tragic lesson to the rest of the country of what not to do to a public healthcare system. We have massive duplication, waste and profit-taking in homecare. We have a huge for-profit long term care system that constantly pushes for decreased staffing regulations and care levels. We have for-profit laboratories that have found any means they can to impose user fees and get ever more government funding at the same time. You want to see costs spiral out of control and quality of service decline? Hand over health services to profit-seeking corporations."

-Irene Harris, Ontario Save Medicare Campaign

Convention display and campaign kickoff!

Get ready! We'll be kicking off the OPSEU Save Medicare campaign at Convention April 4-6. Our campaign will continue until May 15.

The theme of our campaign will be **OPSEU for Public Medicare**. We'll have materials available at the Health Care Divisional Council display at Convention, including buttons, stickers, and other materials from OPSEU, NUPGE and the Ontario Health Coalition.

OPSEU members will be able to take these materials out into their communities and wage a door-to-door campaign to save public medicare.

To help move this campaign forward, the OPSEU Executive Board has approved funding of \$46,000. This will include time off for members, and the materials including buttons and stickers to increase OPSEU's role in the Save Medicare Campaign. We'll have more information and petitions on opseu.org.

Rallies at Romanow hearings

OPSEU's voice should be heard loud

and clear at the Romanow Commission hearings. You can add your voice by joining a rally in support of public medicare.

Romanow has issued an interim report and is conducting public consultations across the country this spring. Public opinion polls say 75-80 per cent of Canadians support public Medicare (OHIP in Ontario) and we must make this clear to Romanow. The Commission is coming to Toronto, Ottawa and Sudbury. We've asked for a chance to make a presentation on behalf of our 25,000 members who work in health care.

Whether or not we are given the opportunity to present, we will have our voices heard.

The Romanow Commission hearings in Ontario will be at:

Toronto: April 2 – 3, Colony Hotel, 89 Chestnut Street

Ottawa: April 4, Congress Centre, Colonel By Drive

Sudbury: April 11, Holiday Inn, 50 Brady Street

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Rallies will be held at Noon outside these locations Apr. 2 (Toronto), Apr.4 (Ottawa), and Apr.11 (Sudbury).

Be active! Make sure you **and your members** get out and make OPSEU's campaign to save medicare the story of the day.

We've already been working:

- The OPSEU Executive Board endorsed the joint Canadian Labour Congress / Canadian Health Coalition statement **Standing Together for Medicare: A Call to Care** on Oct. 24, 2001.

- On Dec. 1, OPSEU members participated in the Ontario-wide Convergence, sponsored by the Ontario Health Coalition, of which OPSEU is an active member. The Convergence brought together 300 community activists from 80 different organizations to develop an Ontario action plan to help save public Medicare, in coordination with the National campaign.

- Representatives from the OPSEU Health Care divisional executives met Feb. 25 and planned our campaign to put OPSEU and its 25,000 members from the health care sector in the forefront of the fight to save medicare (OHIP in Ontario).

- On Feb. 26, the Health Care Divisional Council refined the ideas from the day before and submitted the proposal to the Executive Board.

Ontario Health Coalition

OPSEU members will be working alongside the Ontario Health Coalition (OHC) to step up the political pressure on governments to save medicare. See <http://www.web.net/ohc/> for details.

The OHC is working with local coalitions to build support in each Ontario community for a single-payer, non-profit, universal, comprehensive system.

Our members know privatization is wasteful, expensive and a vehicle for corruption. We know that privatization is about profits - not people. We have to get the word out to the public and speak out for medicare and OHIP.

What we need now is not another dose of privatization! Private health care means waste. It means costs are cut in patient care to produce better profits.

We have to step up the fight to keep our health care system public, and to take back the parts of our system currently in private hands. **We need your active support.**

HEALTH CARE DIVISIONAL COUNCIL DIVISION CHAIRS 2001 - 2003

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This newsletter from the Health Care Divisional Council (HCDC) is sent to local presidents and stewards in the health care sectors. It will also be posted on the Divisional Council's web page at www.opseu.org Click on "Health Care" under BPS sectors. **Please post** the newsletter on your union bulletin board and share it with your colleagues. Let us know what you'd like to hear about. You can send e-mails to us through the link on the HCDC web page. **Authorized for distribution by Leah Casselman, President.**