



October 28, 2002

Ms. Aimee Axler
Chair, OPSEU Central Negotiating Team
Kingston General Hospital
76 Stuart Street
Kingston, ON K7L 2V7

Dear Aimee:

I am writing to you and your Team on behalf of the Hospitals' Negotiating Team and in response to some recent events that cause me grave concern as Chair of the Hospitals' Team and as a CEO of a participating hospital.

Over the last week I have been apprised of certain actions that are being promoted by OPSEU which would impact on hospitals' ability to maintain patient care services. Any strike activity in hospitals is illegal and will put hospitals in the difficult situation of having to respond with legal action. As a CEO, I am very much aware of the recruitment and retention challenges faced by hospitals and the impact that these challenges have on our existing employee population. I am also aware of the importance and value of the services provided by our employees, your members.

Many hospital professionals, including your members, are governed by Colleges that address the responsibility that professionals have to ensure the provision of care to their patients. As a hospital CEO I am also entrusted with the responsibility to ensure the delivery of patient care. As healthcare professionals we all are keenly aware of the importance and reliance that our patients and their families place on the work that we do. Therefore, any action which threatens the delivery of care will be treated very seriously for the impact on our patients, their families, the reputation of the hospitals and also the reputation and professional standing of any employee who participates.

As you know, we have spent many months attempting to address the recruitment and retention challenges, in our sector, at the central bargaining table. Unfortunately, we have not been able to conclude a settlement. Consequently, both parties have made requests for the government to appoint an arbitrator to decide the issues that we have been unsuccessful at resolving. The arbitration process, while not our preferred approach, is now the appropriate way for both parties to get an expeditious resolution of the issues. I need to remind you that it is also the legal way for our respective issues to get addressed. Once an Arbitrator hears the arguments, he or she will render a decision based on those arguments. Illegal strike action, or any activity which is equivalent to a strike, will not put pressure on an Arbitrator when he/she is deliberating.

would only force hospitals to react in order to protect patient care; it would not resolve the issues. At this stage, arbitration is where a resolution will, and should, occur.

I write this letter to you and your Negotiating Team with one request. That you give serious consideration to the concerns I have expressed and that you promote a legal resolution to bargaining, rather than an illegal one.

Sincerely,



Marian Walsh
Chairperson, Hospitals' Negotiating Team

cc: OPSEU Hospital Professionals Central Bargaining Team:

Moya Beall – OPSEU Staff
David Hancock – Toronto General Hospital
Robby Hersh – Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care
James O'Leary – London Health Sciences Centre
Patricia Rout – Lakeridge Health Corporation
Leslie Sanders – Lakeridge Health Corporation
Yves Shank – Sudbury Regional Hospital
Michele Dawson Haber – OPSEU Staff

Hospitals' Negotiating Team