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# It's our nature to care.



**A NEWSLETTER FOR OPSEU MEMBERS WORKING IN LONG TERM CARE**

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## Our Struggle Continues

Fall 2009

Our elected executive from 2007 has changed dramatically since we last met. We have felt the effects of cutbacks and resignations from employment. We have been fortunate to have dedicated people who came back to help the sector and its campaigns. We are also delighted to have Ruth Hamilton assigned as our negotiator. Ruth has been an invaluable resource for us.

Together, we continue to work for our members by participating in meetings with the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC). The struggle continues as we await answers from consultations on the proposal for the new Long Term Care Homes Act, Ombudsman Report regarding the complaint filed by the Ontario Federation of Labour on the “incontinent products” issue and Staffing Plan Committee meetings while maintaining a constant radar on what’s happening in our sector.

We were excited to offer scrub sets and t shirts with our new logo.

“It’s my nature to care” was selected because we know it takes special people to work in these facilities. Sales have been good and these items are now available through OPSEU Enterprises or by contacting the Sector Chair, Joan White. We were so happy with the logo, we incorporated this change in our newsletter. The newsletter is available on line to help OPSEU’s greening initiative.

We welcomed new locals in Region 2 and 4. Our goals are to improve communication within our sector and assist in dealing with issues that our sector membership is facing.

Our struggle continues. Together we can face those challenges for the good of our members and those we serve.

It's my  
nature  
to care.



OPSEU LONG TERM CARE



In 2008, Convention passed a resolution mandating that OPSEU implement a plan that reflects a more representative workforce. With that resolution passed, OPSEU embarked on the Social Mapping Project. OPSEU has hired a consultant TWI Inc, to assist in the completion of the OPSEU Census. The Census initiative will collect statistics and demographics of OPSEU members and staff, to identify any barriers in policies, programs and services. This will provide invaluable information for forecasting and planning for OPSEU’s future and direction.

Please be sure to complete a census form in November.  
**You can Count Me In!!**

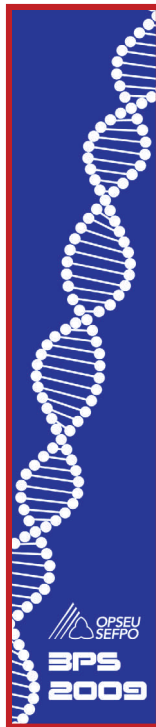
## Developing, Networking and Advocating

This is a reminder to those locals whose delegates have not yet registered for OPSEU's biannual BPS Conference to do so as soon as possible.

This year it will be held at the Doubletree Hilton located on Dixon Road in Toronto, November 26 - 28, 2009.

The theme is Developing, Networking and Advocating in our communities. This is the perfect opportunity for BPS activists to gather and come together on shared issues in the current political climate. The first day is dedicated to the conference theme. The following two days are set aside for the Health Care Divisional Council meetings. Our sector workshop and Sector/Divisional business and elections.

Our sector awaits legislative changes. This would be an opportune time for our members



that are interested in serving the sector to run for election. These next two years will be demanding and dynamic. Being a member of the executive can be very both challenging and rewarding. If you are interested, but unsure, you will have the opportunity to meet with the members of your current executive at the BPS Conference. You can ask questions to gain further insight into the duties and role of the executive. Please check for the location of the Health Care Divisional Council Meet & Greet.

As you may know, this will be the first time the Conference is meeting from Thursday to Saturday. This is a trial run. Please let your Sector Chair know if you prefer starting the Conference on Thursday rather than Friday.

**We look forward to seeing you there!**

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## Health & Safety Committees Pilot Project

Health & Safety has always been a concern in our sector as it is for many other sectors. We are fortunate to have been approached by Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW), to investigate the functionality of our Joint Health & Safety Committees (JHSC). Concerns were raised at the Workplace Violence Workshops that were held this past year. We continue to await a decision on changing legislation in the Occupational Health & Safety Act (Bill 168). The debates continue at Queen's Park. This year's BPS Conference will touch on this issue. We will be asking delegates to complete a questionnaire that will assist us in knowing about our locals JHSCs. Terri Aversa, Health & Safety Officer from OPSEU is working with Ms. Lal from OHCOW. The results of the questionnaire will give us insight as to the direction our next executive will need to take. Our work puts us in a high risk category with WSIB. We all know someone who has been injured on the job and for some, it has caused them to seek other positions as they are no longer able to carry out their usual duties. Your JHSC is there to help keep everyone safe.

We all want to be able to go home at the end of our shift in the same condition we started. Help us help you and your sisters and brothers.



## Still waiting for our 3.5 hours per day for care

The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care issued a second set of draft regulations (regs) for the new Long Term Care Homes Act (LTCHA) on September 15, 2009. As with the first set of draft regs, there was a 30 day consultation period.

OPSEU and other unions had representation at a meeting with MOHLTC. We thought we would be able to see the proposal and discuss our concerns of the proposal. Much to our disappointment those discussions did not occur.

We did succeed, however, in voicing our continued concerns over several other issues. First, we have been given this second set of draft regs without knowing what, if any, decisions were made from the over 600 reports from the first set of regs for consultation. Second, the Ombudsman's finding on the "incontinent briefs" issue raised by the Ontario Federation of Labour has not yet been released. There may be some recommendations surrounding the practice of hoarding and "75% full" practice that some facilities still use.

OPSEU has given us assistance in order to complete our report on the consultation. Sabrina DeGirolamo, and Rick Janson have been assigned to work with us on our campaigns. At our last DivEx meeting, Rick



and Sabrina, jointly with your sector executive, presented our position on this new set of regs.

Some of the submissions to MOHLTC were about the absence of any mention of the 3.5 hours of hands on care for residents, the mandating of the amount of hours per week for other positions and qualifications for certain positions.

The full set of draft regulations are on the MOHLTC website. Section 34 refers to the required qualifications for Personal Support Workers (PSW). It states that every person hired as a PSW after March 31, 2011 must have completed a PSW program that meets the Provincial and Federal standards. It also states that the program must be a minimum of 600 hours in duration (both class and practical time). This issue has raised a lot of concern. We are already feeling the effects staff shortages. W.S.I.B. injuries don't seem to be decreasing. The proposed regs allow for "grand parenting" all current Health care Aides (HCA) as long as they are with their current employer. However, this will not apply if a HCA leaves her place of employment to go elsewhere. OPSEU has proposed the "grand parenting" provision apply to all current HCAs regardless of where they work. This will allow us to maintain people with the skills and abilities to continue to provide quality care.

Further discussions on the legislative changes will take place at the BPS Conference. Please check in with your delegates when they return from the Conference for the upshot of these discussions.



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Authorized for distribution

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