

**Memo:****To: George Smitherman, Minister of Health****From: Nancy Pridham, Vice President, OPSEU Local 500**

---

Dear George:

Hiring more nurses is great, but not when it comes at the expense of the health care system as a whole. Hospitals should not be laying off non-nursing staff in order to fund more nursing positions. Why are our 1,700 members – everyone in this hospital other than doctors and nurses, less valuable for being non-nurses.

Despite the surplus run by this hospital last year, twenty-one clinical psychologists, case managers, stress management therapists, administrative secretaries and others have been laid off. The Centre has arbitrarily eliminated another 21 positions without advising us. In other departments, nurses are replacing former OPSEU positions which have been realized through attrition. If a social worker, occupational therapist or case manager retires, they are replaced by a nurse.

We all have a role to play on the health care team. But this hospital has laid off clinical staff and is reducing staff in other areas to meet your government's political commitments on nurses. The employer tells us it only has funds to hire nurses. This is a shame.

You may have noticed as well that this hospital is not in the best sanitary condition because we do not have the support staff to keep the hospital clean!

As I said, this hospital has a surplus, but it can only hire nurses!

While OPSEU deeply respects the jobs done by the nurses, you should know by now that **there is more to health care than just doctors and nurses**, important as these professionals are. I invite you to tour the hospital with me sometime and talk to the diverse hospital staff: all essential members of the health care team.

Sincerely,

(signed)

Nancy Pridham, Vice President, Local 500