



Health Care Support News

A newsletter for stewards and activists in OPSEU Sector 11, Health Care Support - August, 2006

Fight against LHINs, private (P3) deals

LHINs legislation and our sector

After many hours our members spent on information pickets, informing the public, contacting government representatives and more, we continue the fight for health care. Although OPSEU and its allies were unable to stop the bill setting up the Local Health Integration Networks (LHINS), we can monitor and shape how the government will implement this new bill. LHINs are a potential menace to many workers in health care support. Let's be prepared to step up and speak out when we see potential problems.

The LHINs are expected to complete their first health service plans by the end of October. OPSEU has a LHINs Watch kit -- the first page is made up of sample questions to ask, the second page a feedback form so you can share what you have learned. The kit is online at www.opseu.org/bps/health/splash.htm

Private for-profit P3s still a threat to our health care

Despite the fiasco with the private prison in Penetanguishene, (now back in public hands) and the 407 highway near Toronto (tolls spiraling out of control), the Liberal government is continuing with plans to privatize more government responsibilities, including those in health care.

Under the Liberal plan, 29 new private hospital projects will be designed, financed, built and operated by the private sector. This is the wrong direction for health care. Although recently overshadowed by the LHINs campaign, P3s (public-private partnerships) are a huge concern now and in the future. More and more hospital services could be contracted out. Please keep informed, keep talking and keep the government's plan to expand P3s in the public view.



OPSEU staff members Judy Storey and Rick Janson instruct the Leadership Development Course at Hockley Valley Resort in Orangeville.

Sector holds Leadership Development event

Despite last-minute changes in venue and schedule, everyone attending the recent leadership development event came away with vital lessons on better leadership. The class was smaller than hoped, but this worked in our favour as we quickly became familiar with each other's issues and were able to share stories, triumphs, on-going concerns and great ideas for activism.

Led by the animated Judy Storey and the knowledgeable Rick Janson, our weekend was humorous and fun, yet serious in the intent to better our own activism. This idea of Ruth Hamilton fulfilled all of our expectations. We each walked away stronger in many areas of leadership.

Upcoming municipal vote: know your candidates

This fall we elect our municipal politicians. It is important to be aware of the issues in the upcoming municipal elections and make our voices heard.

In 2003, OPSEU members made a huge difference in helping to elect progressive politicians who understand our issues. Toronto's Mayor David Miller is just one example. In many cities, OPSEU health care issues were front and centre.

Our town and city officials are key community members and, in some cases, fund our employer employers, or are the employers of other hard-working OPSEU members. (This is also true for some elected school trustees!)

For example, ambulance services are mostly run by municipalities, public health is mostly run from the municipalities, and municipal governments are huge contributors to local hospital projects.

Municipalities are getting into P3s including transit projects in Ottawa and Kitchener, the new arena in Oshawa and more. Municipal leaders could put pressure on P3s by withdrawing capital funding for these projects.



Despite an early summer downpour, OPSEU activists marched on Queen's Park June 3rd to protest the government's reckless new program of privatized infrastructure –Photo: Jay Jackson, OPSEU

Listen carefully and question those candidates who wish to represent you in this fall's municipal elections, including on the P3 issue. Find out how informed they are about our health care system and the way services are delivered to the public.

Let's make health care the issue!



Contact OPSEU

If you have questions or concerns about LHINs or P3s, or know of a development in your area, you can contact your sector executive, or Rick Janson, campaigns officer at head office, rjanson@opseu.org

See OPSEU's bi-weekly publication, Dialogue, at www.opseu.org, for timely news on health care issues. Contact Rick for more information.

For questions about the election, or information to relay about the candidates, please contact Tim Little, legislative liaison at OPSEU, tlittle@opseu.org.

New Sector 11 members at Canadian Blood Services National Call Centre happy to be a part of OPSEU

OPSEU welcomed almost 250 new members on July 11, 2006, as staff of the Canadian Blood Services' National Contact Centre in Sudbury voted to be part of the union.

The CBS National Contact Centre handles calls from clients across Canada. The centre books appointments and does "call backs" to previous donors, asking if they would like to donate again.

This service is vital to our blood supply and to Canada's health care system.

There are 36 full-time members and over 213 who are considered part-time. But almost all of the part-timers work more than 24 hours per week.

On Aug. 3, 2006, OPSEU's newest local elected stewards, a local executive, a negotiating team and a pay equity team. Sara Lauten was elected president and Shelley Canning is vice-president.

The workers at the National Contact Centre, now organized as Local 619, join more than a thousand other OPSEU members working for CBS across Ontario, in Sector 11 as well as Sector 17 (community health professionals).

Inform yourself about the OPSEU Joint Trusteed Benefit Fund

The **OPSEU Joint Trusteed Benefit Fund** was established in 1996 as a not-for-profit multi-employer benefit fund. It offers plan members and their employers access to comprehensive and affordable benefit programs, regardless of the size or nature of their workplace. The Trust Fund is made up of many different organizations, and its primary focus is to keep prices competitive and maximize buying power.

Our purchasing power holds many advantages over traditional vehicles for purchasing insurance. In partnership with our benefit providers, our contract sets out how much we pay for the services we need. The Trust Fund makes sure that every possible dollar goes to support our benefit plans.

With an equal number of employer and union trustees on our Board, the Trust Fund deals jointly with evolving trends in health care, rising costs of insurance and today's economic realities. By joining with other organizations, we can do more with our benefit plans.

No additional costs regardless of group size

Unlike many other multi-employer plans, the Trust Fund can mirror any existing plan, or specific workplace requirements such as those in collective agreements or employment contracts. Reduced insurer expenses still provide all the administrative services, claims payment



Securing Your Benefits Through Partnership

Since 1996

OPSEU Joint Trusteed Benefit Fund

services, drug and ID cards, documents and booklets that your organization needs to operate an effective benefit program. Regardless of group size, the Trust Fund does not have additional costs, commissions or high insurer expenses.

Securing your benefits through partnership has been our motto since 1996 and together we really can do more.

For more information, click www.ojtbfc.ca. If you feel this plan may benefit you and your colleagues, please contact the OJTBF at 416.443.9223/1.877.766.7823 or by e-mail at benefits@ofbfc.ca.

Featured web sites this issue

Save Ontario Parks!

Find out more! Sign our petition! Visit
www.saveontarioparks.ca

The Ontario government has slashed staffing levels in our provincial parks for the summer of 2006. The cuts are equal to 226 full-time summer jobs for seasonal workers and regular students. These cuts compromise ecological integrity, nature education, park safety, recreational opportunities, and convenience for all park users. And park users who expect clean bathrooms, frequent garbage pick-up, well-maintained trails, and easy access to information may be disappointed this summer. This web site, hosted by OPSEU, is a meeting

place for everyone who believes our Ontario parks are worth taking care of.

www.democracynow.org

Democracy Now! is a national, daily, independent, award-winning news program airing on over 450 stations in North America. Pioneering the largest public media collaboration in the U.S., hosted by award-winning journalists Amy Goodman and Juan Gonzalez and produced out of the Downtown Community Television Center, a community media center in New York City's Chinatown.

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