



# VIOLENCE AT WORK: IT'S **NOT** PART OF THE JOB!

## Action memo

Date: January 22, 2008

To: All stewards in the Community Services Division

From: Warren (Smokey) Thomas, President  
Deborah Gordon, Chair, Community Services Divisional Council

**Re: Campaign to end workplace violence**

Dear sisters and brothers,

Nearly one in five violent incidents happen in the workplace, according to Statistics Canada. Physical and sexual assault, threats, harassment and verbal abuse are all examples of violence. Social services, health care and corrections workers are among the occupational groups at highest risk for violence at work.

We are writing today to announce a campaign we're launching in the Community Services Division to end workplace violence.

This division was set up in June of last year to give OPSEU members who work in community-based social services and corrections a forum to discuss, strategize and advocate on common issues. The sectors in this division are: developmental services, children's aid societies, child and family services, child care, community agencies, youth corrections, child treatment centres and children's mental health.

We have decided to take on violence at work because members from a range of our workplaces, including youth custody, group homes and clients' homes, are increasingly at risk of being victims of violence.

With the chronic underfunding of our services, staffing shortages, inadequate training, increased emphasis on paperwork, and the growing use of volunteers to do our work, it's no wonder we do not feel safe on the job.

It's time our employers and the government took action to end workplace violence. Employers must fulfill their legal responsibility under the Occupational Health and Safety Act to keep workers safe. The government must enforce the law and improve it, including specifying the steps employers should take to prevent and protect against workplace violence.

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To begin this urgent campaign, we will hold regional workshops in April and May on enforcing workers' right to a safe workplace. **In order to prepare for these workshops, we need your help.**

**Please identify the OPSEU members in your workplace:**

- 1) who sit on the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC); or
- 2) who are worker health and safety representatives if you don't have a JHSC.

**Contact us with the information through one of the following ways:**

- a) Go to [www.opseu.org/bps/social/endviolence.htm](http://www.opseu.org/bps/social/endviolence.htm) and submit the campaign form. *Or:*
- b) E-mail [endworkplaceviolence@opseu.org](mailto:endworkplaceviolence@opseu.org). Let us know your name, workplace and local union number. *Or:*
- c) Contact campaigns officer Megan Park by telephone at 1-800-268-7376 ext. 8207 or by fax at (416) 448-1762.

The Community Services Divisional Council has the full support of the OPSEU Executive Board in this important campaign and I know it can expect your full support and participation as well.

Thank you in advance for helping us put pressure on employers and government to end workplace violence.

In solidarity,



Warren (Smokey) Thomas  
President

Deborah Gordon  
Chair, Community Services  
Divisional Council

cc: OPSEU Executive Board, Community Services Divisional Council,  
local service representatives, BPS supervisor