



# Local Action

Information for OPSEU members at regional centres in the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services

## OPSEU local presidents approve plan to fight closures

### Shutdowns coming “faster than you think”: Minister

OPSEU local presidents at Ontario’s last three regional centres have approved a plan to fight the closure of their facilities and protect the jobs of 1,950 workers.

The fightback plan arose out of statements by Community and Social Services Minister Sandra Pupatello that the closure of centres in Blenheim, Orillia, and Smiths Falls will “probably happen faster than you think it will.

“We will do it while we are in government,” she told 500 people at the annual conference of Community Living Ontario in June.

OPSEU’s fightback plan was designed by local presidents Rose Clark (Local 126, Southwestern Regional Centre), Liz Daubney (L. 323, Huronia) and Dave Lundy (L. 436, Smiths Falls) in a meeting July 19 with the OPSEU Ministry

Enforcement and Renewal Committee (MERC) for Community and Social Services. MERC members are Roxanne Barnes (L. 317), David Chew (L. 323), and Ron Strong (L. 586), aided by OPSEU Job Security Officer Stephen George.

The OPSEU Executive Board gave its full support to the plan at an emergency meeting July 22.

“It is extremely disappointing that the Minister, who received the support of many OPSEU members in the last election, is already

sharpening the axe to get rid of our jobs,” said Chew, an OPSEU executive board member who works at Huronia Regional Centre. “Members at all three facilities have to get organized in the workplace, in their communities, and at Queen’s Park,” he said. “We have to protect the quality services we provide and the decent union wages we earn.

“That’s what our campaign is all about.”

Campaign details will appear in upcoming issues of this newsletter in the days ahead.

## Did you know?

### *The impacts on you and your family*

If your facility closes, here are some facts that you should be aware of:

**1** Early retirement may not be an option. Under the OPSEU collective agreement in the OPS, the Factor 80 early retirement

plan is scheduled to expire on March 31, 2005.

**2** Your bumping rights may not help if all three facilities close at once – there may not be any jobs to bump to.

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## “Did you know?”

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**3** The large majority of the clients currently living in your facility will be transferred out of your community. In past closures, most clients have ended up in their home communities. That means most OPSEU members will have to leave town if they want to keep working with people with developmental disabilities.

**4** Under the collective agreement, regional centres that close are covered under Schedule “D” of Appendix 18. Schedule D employees do not follow their work

when it moves out of the public service.

**5** The McGuinty government has failed to keep its election promise to restore “successor rights” to public service employees. Successor rights give workers the right under law to move with their jobs, their collective agreement, and their union protection if it is transferred to a new employer. The previous government stripped public service employees of these rights in 1995.

**6** Wages for developmental services workers in community group homes are much lower – often 30 per cent lower, or more – than they are in the public service.

**7** Community group homes do not provide the same level of benefits, hours of work, or pensions – where they exist at all – that OPSEU members in the public service receive.

## Stay tuned to your local

Watch for more details on the OPSEU campaign – including what you can do – in the days ahead. To get involved immediately and help get information out to OPSEU members, contact your local president, listed at right.

At **Southwestern** Regional Centre, contact **Rose Clark** at (519) 676-5431 ext. 2368 (w) or (519) 351-6713

At **Huron** Regional Centre, contact **Liz Daubney** at (705) 326-7361 ext. 2402 (w) or (705) 327-5896

At **Rideau** Regional Centre, contact **Dave Lundy** at (613) 284-0123 ext. 2600 (w) or (613) 269-2584