



# Local Action

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

## Minister meets OPSEU team, touts new “specialized care centres”

Ontario’s last three regional centres will close despite massive economic impacts and the effect on residents and their families, Community and Social Services Minister Sandra Pupatello says.

Pupatello met with the OPSEU Ministry Enforcement and Renewal Committee (MERC) on Dec. 7. Pupatello said her ministry has no plan yet for how residents would be moved into the community, or what would happen to regional centre staff. She said the government is concerned about the local economic impact of the closures, adding that her ministry is talking to other ministries about potential uses for the facilities.

On the positive side, the minister did commit to taking a closer look at the “Centres of Excellence” concept put forward by OPSEU and parents of the residents.

She also revealed that ministry is planning to build five new “specialized care centres” to serve developmentally disabled clients in the

community. However, she would not commit that the three regional centres could form part of the five new facilities.

The MERC team was joined at the meeting by the local

presidents of the three regional centres, who are now putting together detailed descriptions of some of the unique programs that are not offered anywhere else.

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## Closing centres targets women, disabled people

Closure of the three Regional Centres will have a disproportionate impact on the working women who make up more than 70 per cent of the 1,900 staff to be affected.

“This makes a mockery of the McGuinty Liberals’ commitment to equity,” said OPSEU President Leah Casselman. She noted that the ComSoc minister, Sandra Pupatello, is also minister responsible for women’s issues in the Ontario cabinet.

“It’s hard to believe that this minister, of all people, would target a sector where women comprise most of the workforce, and who serve some

of the most vulnerable people in the community,” she said.

The overall effect of the closures will be to reduce the pay level of women, since Regional Centres staff get better pay and benefits than similar jobs in community agencies.

“The real bottom line of the government’s plan is to reduce payroll costs, even if women’s pay is brought down with it,” Casselman said.

She said OPSEU plans to enlist the help of women and other equity-seeking community groups to assist in fighting the closures.

*For campaign contact information, see page 2.*

# Tune in to your OPSEU local

To get involved locally in any aspect of the campaign to save our regional centres, contact your OPSEU local president, listed here.

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