



Red Cross Update

We will be returning to the bargaining table on March 3rd and 4th with Red Cross. As a result of the recent release from the Minister of Health to reinstate competitive bidding and no mention of funding for home care workers to stimulate a stable workforce by addressing our issues on travel time it is time to return to the bargaining table and exert pressure to bring this issue to a head. We will be planning job actions in February, so be prepared!

We have had some high level meetings with the government during the past two months. Sharleen has had two meetings with the Ministry of Health one of which was with David Caplan himself. She has also met with the Minister of Labour on the issue of successor rights.

I had a meeting with the Ministry of Health as part of a delegation with the Ontario Federation of Labour. At that meeting I spoke on behalf of SEIU regarding issues in our home care system and stressed the need for paid travel time, increased mileage compensation and wages. There was also a meeting last week with the Ministry of Health and Pat Baranek and Carol Kushner regarding the recommendations of the public inquiry document entitled 'Home Care The Change We Need' Part of their recommendations included paid travel time and parity in wages with the other PSW providers in health care. (see attached recommendations)

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The Red Cross has also had a few meetings with the Ministry of Health on the issue of the negotiations and what are priority issues and the ability to grant these demands in the current bidding system and the results a strike could bring. In their letter to Davis Caplan it stated "The Red Cross is the largest provider of personal support services in Ontario with 3.3 million hours; 40,000 clients per year; and 3,000 support workers located throughout 13 of the 14 LHINs. Approximately 18% of all personal support services in Ontario are provided by Red Cross staff." They also stated "The transition in an environment of labor disruption is typically difficult; more so than during a change as a result of the RFP process. In addition there are heightened emotions at the time of strike that create further challenges. Earlier this year we saw the impact of community concern and media attention in Hamilton. This situation provides a gauge on the community unrest and disruption that can occur during similar situations." Obviously the Minister is not listening to what all stakeholders are telling him. The time has come to show the Red Cross as well as the Minister of Health that Red Cross workers are ready to take actions to deal with issues that directly effect the performance of their jobs. A stable and fairly compensated workforce is the first step to ensuring quality of care and a home care system that truly works for clients. The SEIU voice of home care workers must continue to carry that message until we see real change. It is up to us to put more pressure on the government and get our voices heard loud, clear and united. This is an opportunity we can not afford to pass us by. We must work diligently to get justice for home care workers.





**THE SEIU LOCAL 1 CANADA
EXECUTIVE BOARD
WISH YOU A HAPPY & SAFE
HOLIDAY SEASON**

Running on Empty Campaign



With coordination of the National SEIU campaign called “Running on Empty” and the Local 1 Canada home care action campaign we

have received a lot of attention in the past few months. We have been on local TV news and radio stations, in the newspapers and a topic of discussion throughout labour councils in Ontario. I want to thank all who have participated and spread the word by your actions of writing letters to the editor and speaking up in your communities. Your dedication and hard work has once again got the attention about issues affecting home care workers. Be ready for a new campaign in February. Home care workers are **INVISIBLE NO MORE.**

Action Conference Call

There will be a conference call for **ALL RED CROSS ONLY** chief stewards to discuss our plan of action to return to bargaining. The call will be on January 19th at 5pm. We will be using the same call in number as before. If you do not have it, contact your union representative. Please plan to be on the call or have someone take the call for you. Thanks and get ready for 2009.

In Solidarity, Cathy

Home Care Essay Contest Winners

The winners of the SEIU Local 1 Canada home care essay writing contest for PSW week were:

- Donna Wittet
- Anne Fisher
- Karen Hamilton
- Deborah Burr
- Ellen McCollough
- Colin Ross
- Sue Bosch
- Yvonne Greaves
- Doreen Thornhill
- Alice Smith

Each story was very inspiring. All the winners received a gift certificate for their top ten ranking. Their entries can be seen on the local website.

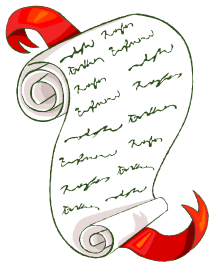
**HOME CARE CHRISTMAS
LETTER TO
DALTON MCGUINITY &
DAVID CAPLAN**

Dear Premier:

My wish for this Christmas Season is that the government values the vital work home care workers do for the people of Ontario.

We love are jobs but deserve travel time, job security and a fair wage. In a year that you are trying to address poverty please consider that home care workers as we are currently compensated live in that reality every day.

Please help us and give us dignity and respect for the job we do. This is my Christmas wish to you.



Seasons Greetings

RECOMMENDATIONS IN PUBLIC INQUIRY REPORT ADDRESSES KEY ISSUES IN HOME CARE DELIVERY

The report, entitled Home Care: Change We Need, presents the findings of an extensive cross-province consultation and research study of the Ontario's home care sector. It also offers important new recommendations for significant reform.

The report's three authors, Carol Kushner, Patricia Baranek, and Marian Dewar, are recognized policy experts.

Home Care Effect on Ontarians 649,244 clients received home care and almost 26 million visits/hours of home care were provided in 2005/06. On any given day, about 185,000 clients receive home nursing and supportive care, and many of them are long term clients. In 2005/2006 the majority of clients were over 65 years of age (58%) with adults comprising 32% and children 10%. Provincial expenditures on home care were \$1.41 billion in 2005/06.

Key Findings

The most important finding is that change in Ontario's home care system is needed. No one in the sector is happy with the home care system as it is currently organized and the research supports calls for change.

Ontario is the only province that relies exclusively on competitive bidding for homecare.

Home care clients are concerned about disruptions to care and losing their workers because of competitive bidding.

The workforce is precariously unstable. Home care workers reported feeling unappreciated because they have little job security, lower wages, and fewer benefits than other workers in other health sectors. They described negative impacts of casual employment and insufficient travel compensation in a context of volatile gas prices. They objected to signing 'gag' orders and noted how competitive bidding has undermined their conditions and cooperation among agencies. Many reported that they had already left or intend to leave the sector. Labour organizations reported that homecare workers in Ontario do not have the same protections as workers in other sectors and

home care workers in other provinces, noting that many do not have pensions, sick pay, statutory holiday pay, and right to severance or successor rights. Unions also criticized competitive bidding, reporting that while it drives down wages it does not necessarily result in public savings.

Some of the Recommendations for Reform Include

The authors recommend the following concrete reforms to improve stability and to secure homecare as a strategic and important part of the health care continuum:

Stabilize the workforce to protect continuity and quality of care:

As soon as possible, establish wage parity for all professional and personal support workers (sometimes called health care aides) so that new minimum wages reflect the average minimums paid in the nursing home and hospital sectors.

Immediately ensure that mileage rates paid to PSWs and homemakers reflect the volatility of gas prices (as well as the costs of wear and tear and vehicle maintenance) and ensure parity in the mileage paid to all workers throughout the home care sector; within 18 months require that all home care workers be compensated for travel time, with the amount of compensation based on a proportion of their hourly rate.

Within 3 years, ensure permanent full-time work for at least 70 percent of all home care professionals, PSWs and homemakers.

Within 3 years, ensure all home care workers are entitled to receive benefits, including a pension plan, health coverage (dental and drugs) and sick pay.

Immediately eliminate "elect to work" and ensure that all home care employees receive payment for statutory holidays, notice of termination and severance and create a regulatory requirement for successor rights.

FOR THE FULL REPORT GO TO THE SEIU LOCAL 1 CANADA WEBSITE OR ASK YOUR UNION REPRESENTATIVE FOR A COPY