



Social Services News

Community Services Divisional Council | Fall 2012

Message from the Chair

It's time for the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) to catch up to our occupational work hazards in the 21st century! Here's some history on how occupational health began to be recognized by government. The legalization of Trade Unions occurred in 1872 and within 12 years, organized labour had succeeded in securing basic health and safety working conditions under the Ontario Factories Act. Paid work still occurred mainly in agriculture or in the factory and women didn't have the right to vote until 1919, but it was a start. The "modern day" version of the Occupational Health and Safety Act was passed in 1978. The concept of safety and illness prevention within one's occupation and work environment remained primarily focused on traditional industry.

A report titled "Valuing Care in Australia – Achieving Pay Equity in the Social and Community Services Sector" (June 2011) offers an interesting perspective on why wages are low in the Social and Community Services Sector. An argument could be made that this hypothesis could explain why Health and Safety legislation still does not recognize the inherent occupational hazards we face every day in our work. The author noted that low pay was related not only to gender, but to the sector's link to its "volunteer past". It was further suggested that during the post second world-war reconstruction period there was growth in "voluntary charitable activity performed by women". By the 1970's, governments had "carved out a significant role for the state in the growing sector [eg: childcare, and eldercare] which further drove professionalism and marketization of care work".

We know that there are inherent occupational health risks in our work. The government has begun to recognize some of these risks through legislation that addresses workplace violence and harassment (effective June 15, 2010). But legislation has not gone far enough. There is a growing body of knowledge regarding the effects of psycho-social risk factors on one's physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. Progressive countries are addressing these risk factors using a primary prevention model – reducing these risk factors through development of workplace policies and practices, is both prudent and progressive.

The CSDC piloted the Psycho-Social Stress Project at the June 2011 BPS Conference. On October 24th, we received unanimous support from the OPSEU Board of Directors to fund this project. In the coming weeks, you will be hearing more about how you can participate in this project within your individual bargaining units. It will be launched in January 2013. Get involved. Together, we can bring about change and ensure that our well-being at work includes addressing both physical and psycho-social hazards.

In Solidarity,

Deb Gordon
CSDC Chair



For members in:

Developmental Services	Sector 2
Children's Aid Societies	Sector 4
Child Treatment	Sector 15
BPS Corrections	Sector 7
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Authorized for distribution by

Warren (Smokey) Thomas
President, OPSEU

The Commission for the Review of Social Assistance

In October the Commission released its final report, outlining 108 recommendations to restructure the delivery of social assistance in Ontario. The most critical recommendation was that the Ontario Disability Support Program be downloaded to the municipalities, merging Ontario Works and ODSP. OPSEU's position is that the collapse of the two programs would lead to the inconsistent delivery of services across the province and create further bureaucratic layers and costs.

The report's emphasis securing employment for people with disabilities at all costs exposes the underlying goal of saving money and forcing vulnerable people into precarious, low-wage work. The focus on linking with employers to get people back to work shifts the responsibility away from the provincial government advancing a provincial labour market strategy that addresses the prevalence of low-wage work and rising inequality.

Recommended cuts to the Community Start Up, Maintenance Benefit for those on OW and the elimination of the Special Diet for ODSP recipients will create more hardship.

To read the report visit: <http://www.socialassistancereview.ca/home>

Psychotherapy Act Update

The status of registration timelines in the College of Psychotherapy and Mental Health Workers remains highly uncertain at this time following MOHLTC's November 21st response to the August 24th letter from the transitional council stating that the Ministry are not in agreement with the proposed classification of "Mental Health Workers".

A response from the Transitional Council to the Ministry's letter was sent on November 29th requesting a meeting with the Ministry to discuss 'next steps' in light of this decision and request that the transitional council address this concern. To read the letters in full, visit: <http://www.collegeofpsychotherapists.on.ca/pages/Home>

Is your employer maintaining their Pay Equity obligations?

The Union needs to ensure that pay equity is maintained in each workplace we represent. Generally, where there is Local/unit bargaining, the Staff Rep will maintain pay equity with the employer. Where pay equity was negotiated centrally ie: CAS, pay equity is maintained centrally through the Sector Negotiator.

Take a minute to assess your unit's progress on pay equity and speak to your staff representative:

1. **Does your unit have a pay equity plan?**
2. **Has pay equity come up during bargaining?**
3. **Do you understand what the pay equity maintenance plan is?**

Pay Equity Commission of Ontario: <http://www.payequity.gov.on.ca/en/index.php>

National Institute of Labour Studies Inc, "Gender Pay equity reform in Australia: what is the way forward" by Meg Smith <http://www.freepatentsonline.com/article/Australian-Bulletin-Labour/213082879.html>

Workplace stress survey

We are currently recruiting coordinators from each bargaining unit. You should have received a coordinators information package. If you have not, contact your sector chair. Your participation in the survey will:

- Highlight the importance of worker representation
- Collect and evaluate data on factors leading to mental injuries
- Develop strategies to prevent mental injuries in their workplace

For information contact: Brendan Kilcline at: bkilcline@opseu.org (January 2013)

The CSDC through your bargaining unit leadership and volunteer coordinators is promoting the participation of all of our community services units to complete the workplace stress survey.



Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers Inc.

The greater the number of workers who participate, the greater the impact the survey results will have. Units will also have access to survey results limited to their own unit. Unit specific information can be used in bargaining and to advocate for health and safety changes in the workplace.

Background: On October 10, over 10 unions and Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW) launched a resource kit to help workers take action on workplace stress. Twelve labour groups have been working with the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers and researchers since 2009 to develop a resource kit to help Ontario workers take action on workplace stress.



ANTI-AUSTERITY

Public sector cuts hurt women

A global trend is evident in countries that pursue austerity and cuts to the public sector - women are disproportionately affected as both employees and as users of public services.

Following the release of the 2012 federal budget, the Canadian Labour Congress argued that cuts to the public sector would result in increasing levels of inequality for women and other vulnerable groups. The gendered impacts of budget cuts over time have undermined women's role in the workforce and have contributed to an increase in women's inequality. The decline in women's equality as tracked by the United Nations shows that in 1996 Canada ranked number one in terms of sex equality. In 2010/11, we slipped to 18th place.

Adrie Naylor in her article, *Economic Crisis and Austerity: the Stranglehold on Canada's Families*, argues that cuts to the public sector have caused a "she-recession." Women have been more severely affected because they are much more highly represented in public sector jobs. Sheila

Block, Director of Economic Analysis at the Wellesley Institute, highlights in Ontario budget 2012, Austerity is bad for our health, that cuts to the public service have a disproportionate impact on women, moving them into more precarious employment, increasing unpaid work, and placing a strain on family incomes especially in areas hardest hit by the loss of manufacturing jobs in Ontario.

Women comprise 60 per cent of Ontario public sector employees and 80 of social services work. On average women in the public sector are paid 4.5 per cent more than women doing comparable work in the private sector.

Social services workers in children's aid societies and developmental services agencies are now facing agency budget cuts. These cuts attack women, children and the most vulnerable. It's time to make this a women's issue.

Community Services Divisional Council

Chicken Pot Pie for the D.S. Sector's Soul

Developmental Services is a field that is not always a popular choice for a career. We are often told by our friends, family and acquaintances, that it takes a special person to do the job that we do, and it does. Through our work we empower people with disabilities to live a life that has intrinsic value. We provide supports that promote a life of choice, autonomy, inclusion, and equality. In the past people with developmental disabilities were segregated and forgotten by society.

Our sector continues to experience underfunding, with more than 6000 people on residential waiting lists. And yet, workers make a choice every day to make a difference one person at a time with dedication, compassion, and plenty of patience. It is a difficult job, one that can often make us question our reasons for having chosen such a career path. It is not our pay checks that inspire us to continue to believe in the importance behind what it is that we do, it's the encouraging experiences that motivate us to persevere in this field.

We want to hear YOUR inspirational stories. Submissions can be about an individual that you have supported (confidentiality must be maintained), or about a co-worker who has inspired you in some way.

New Edition Of Chicken Pot Pie For The D.S. Sector's Soul

The sector will award a \$100.00 visa gift card for the best story. Submissions can be sent to chickenpotpie4ds@gmail.com.

The deadline for entries is February 28, 2013. All submissions will be included in a special edition. This is a great opportunity to celebrate our work... Because We Care.

Sue Walker, Sector Chair



Participation Lodge members end strike

Members of OPSEU Local 235 ratified a new contract on November 13 ending their strike. More than 50 workers held picket lines for more than eight weeks at all three Participation Lodge locations; Holland Centre, Owen Sound and Hanover.

The three year deal includes a \$300 signing bonus, a stipend of \$500 for FT and \$300 for PT and casual employees, a general wage increase of \$0.25 in the second year and \$0.25 in the third year. Members achieved seniority for casual employees, an increase in sick leave provisions and an increase in the employer's co-benefit coverage to 85 per cent. Members can be proud to have taken a firm stand for what they believe in. A special thanks goes to Local president, Deb Powell, who assisted the unit with mobilizing and coordinating solidarity throughout the strike.



President Smokey Thomas tells MCYS Minister to act on workload issues/cuts

In June, President Thomas wrote the Minister highlighting the growing consensus that workload issues are impeding the work performed by child protection workers. Calls for a workload study have come from a variety of sources including recommendations from a coroner's inquest; the previous Minister, Laurel Broten, and from the provincial office responsible for child advocacy. Most recently, the report "My Real Life Book," was released by the Office of the Provincial Child Advocate for Children and Youth. Among its many excellent recommendations one in

particular stands out: "Decrease worker caseloads and reduce the movement of young people in care. If children have ever experienced 13 weeks in total care then they should have the right to access extended care and maintenance."

CAS needs to ensure that child protection work is balanced with nurturing. The sector executive looks forward to putting workload front and centre of our activities in the coming year.

CAS Postcard Campaign

In October the Ministry of Children and Youth Services announced that it would not fund agency deficits, amounting to a \$42 million dollar shortfall across the province. To balance their budgets local agencies are being forced to cut staff and programming at many CAS agencies.

On November 20, the National Day of the Child, the CAS sector launched a postcard campaign, demanding that MCYS stop the cuts. Across the province members wore blue ribbons, held informational events and signed cards. A big thank-you to Steve Dick, president of OPSEU Local 258 for holding a successful rally to launch the campaign, and to all the units across the province that participated in the day.

Let's continue to hold the Ministry of Children and Youth Services accountable and remind the Minister that there are children behind their dollar signs. Please continue to circulate cards to colleagues and beyond. Forward all signed cards or to order more cards/posters contact: Luisa Quarta, at 1-800-268-77376 ext. 8628.

Jane Kaija, Sector Chair



OPSEU wins merger votes in N.E., ON

On June 26 staff of the North Eastern Ontario Family & Children's Services chose OPSEU as their official bargaining representative. In a vote held June 20 and 21, 2012 the members voted 77 per cent in favour of being represented by OPSEU.

This vote is the result of a merger of Jeanne Sauvé Family Services, Timiskaming Child & Family Services and Child & Family Services of Timmins & District. With this merger of two OPSEU worksites and one former CUPE worksite, OPSEU's Children's Aid Societies Sector now has 380 members who provide child protection services to families in North Eastern Ontario. Special thanks go to Local 639 President Barb Hutchings, Local 665 President Kim Kazur and the entire OPSEU organizing committee for their tremendous work during this campaign. Welcome to our newest members!

OPSEU Local 454, Ottawa CAS gets one the best deals yet

More than 350 CAS workers in Ottawa achieve one of the best deals in the sector found anywhere in Ontario in the last few years. Local president Chry Tremblay is proud of having secured a new four-year contract that features a 5.9 per cent wage increase over the life of the deal without agreeing to concessions. The deal also includes improvements to conditions of casual employment, benefits and mileage allowance.

Local 454 achieved the provincial discussion table (PDT) keeping in line the CAS sector standard. Congratulations to all the local members in successfully fighting back concessions.

The importance of addressing occupational stressors

OPSEU's Children's Treatment Sector members piloted the COPSQ Psychosocial survey in May 2012. Out of 29 bargaining units, 23 participated in the project. Individualized reports were sent to bargaining units on October 16th and outcomes were further reviewed at our CTS bargaining forum held on October 25th. For those units that still wish to participate, there will be another opportunity in the new-year when we launch the project to the remainder of the CSD Sectors. If interested, please email Deb Gordon, CTS Chair (dagordon@rivernet.net) for further information.

To encourage participation in the project, the CTS Sector sponsored a \$500 prize to the bargaining unit that had the highest member participation in completing the survey. Congratulations to Local 441, Open Doors bargaining unit, with 88 percent of members who completed the COPSQ Psychosocial Stress survey.

We believe that addressing psycho-social stress risk factors within the workplace requires a collaborative creative response by both members and employers. We are therefore pleased to report that our proposal to present the project findings at the CMHO Conference

on November 19th and 20th was accepted. Terri Aversa (OPSEU Health and Safety Officer), and John Oudyk (OHCOW) presented the findings and promoted the value of using the COPSQ within our workplaces. A panel of unionized and non-unionized employers and CTS members who believe in taking a progressive approach also participated in a lively and well received discussion.

If you were unable to attend the CTS bargaining forum on October 25th and want to order Kids Matter lanyards, jelly bracelets, Kids Matter t-shirts or door hangers, please forward your order number to Alex Dell (adell@opseu.org) ASAP.

Deb Gordon, Chair



Local 145, Huron House Boys' Home ratifies first collective agreement

After protracted negotiations, the members of OPSEU Local 145 ratified their first collective agreement in June 2012. The member's bargained a 2 percent wage increase over a 34 month contract. Scott Honke and his team effectively rallied support from their community. President Smokey Thomas attended a rally in Bright's Grove and donated baseball gloves and balls for the youth in care. Congratulations to the members of this new unit.



Sector 7, BPS Corrections



Welcome to the new season that brings many new challenges. We have been focused on supporting units to follow-up on pay equity in their bargaining with some success.

We have been trying to assist individual units to enforce their individual pay equity plans. In some cases members have received annual increases while others have received significant retroactive payments. To find out what your entitlement is, request a copy of your pay equity plan from employer. If your employer fails to produce your plan or you believe that you are not maintaining or adhering to your plan contact your staff representative for assistance and also explore the option of striking a Pay Equity Committee.

Our Sector attended the annual NUPGE Corrections Working Session in Ottawa. The session was informative and in maintaining solidarity and staying informed on a number of trends and standards. The implementation of Bill C-10 is expected to have a significant impact on the sentencing of our clients. We will be monitoring the impact of this new legislation.

OPSEU's Executive Board unanimously approved funding for our Sector to hold its first Bargaining Conference. Your Sector Executive has begun to work with various departments within OPSEU to work towards achieving the highest possible province-wide standards in our collective

agreements. We have been working on updating and improving common language, identifying priority issues and developing a coordinated approach to bargaining.

Our first Bargaining Conference will take place on February 20th, 2013 at the Delta Toronto Airport.

Units that will be in bargaining in 2013 OR have an expired collective agreement are entitled to send on delegate from their unit. If your unit is not in bargaining you are welcome to attend but will require funding from your local. Notices will be mailed in December.

All community services sectors are participating in a workplace stress survey. Each unit has been asked to select a volunteer "coordinator" We strongly encourage all members in our sector to complete the COPSOQ survey which will be rolling out in January 2013.

Stay tuned for the coordinators in your bargaining units to provide you with links to the survey. High response rates will ensure that we have useful data to make improvements in our workplaces.

Jonathan Guider, Sector Chair

OPSEU Local 518, Elizabeth Fry Toronto

After a long bargaining process that narrowly avoided a work stoppage, 40 workers at Elizabeth Fry Toronto ratified a new collective agreement on October 23. The new agreement includes a wage increase of three per cent over the next three years, as well as a signing bonus, automatic conversion of contract positions to permanent positions after 12 months, and the ability to have a union representative present when filing a harassment and

discrimination complaint against management. Bargaining team members Jamie McGuire, Hilda Namu and Lorraine McKellar thank everyone who stood in solidarity with the unit. This is their second round of negotiations with the employer and the team is proud of their members for standing firm and sending the employer a strong message about what they are willing to tolerate, and what they think we are worth.



Building our sector capacity local by local

This past June, members from across Ontario met in Toronto for the 1st Community Agencies training conference. Thirty-three members attended from across all of our regions. Sessions covered topics such as filing grievances, interpreting collective agreements and connecting with your local. Members left with a better understanding of how OPSEU works as a whole, how to better engage their members and to help support them with confidence. The conference also provided excellent time for networking and learning from each other and a tool kit filled with resources. The feedback from those who attended was extremely positive and we would like to thank everyone who attended for sharing their knowledge and experiences.



At our last Convention in April we held a Sector meeting and invited Sherri Hearty to do a presentation about The OPSEU Pension Plan System or TOPPS Fund. TOPPS was created for members in the Broader Public Service (BPS) who do not have a pension plan. The presentation is approximately 45 minutes and is very clear and informative. We encourage members who do not have a Pension Plan to invite Sherri to speak to both your members and to your employers. Sherri can be contacted by calling OPSEU direct at 416-443-8888 or at shearty@opseu.org.



BPS Conference June 21-23 (Sheraton)

Call packages will go out in the spring and we want to see you all there.

Amy Clements, Sector Chair

OPSEU Local 540, Homes First

Toronto supportive housing workers at Homes First are in mediation and currently without a contract. After talks broke off the employer hired security guards and low-paid replacement workers in an act of intimidation. Workers face a wall of 88 concessions: eliminate top-up pay for pregnancy / parental leave and EI, an increase in the hours of work without compensation (amounting to a 6.5 per cent pay cut), a rollback of vacation leave to 1995 levels, a cut in sick leave time by more than 50 per cent.

To find out more and support their struggle, go to: <http://www.opseu.org/bps/communityagencies/index.htm>



At the table in fall 2012

The following sectors are in bargaining:

Child Treatment5 units
 Developmental Services.....3 units
 Youth Justice.....2 units

Children's Aid Societies 1 units
 Community Services 6 units

SECTOR HIGHLIGHTS

Sector 2 – Developmental Services

L 511 - Surrey Place Centre

A four-year renewal agreement effective April 1, 2012 expiring March 31, 2016

- general wage increase 2% Apr/14; 2% Apr/15
- educational stipends: \$1200 for FT and \$600 for PT in 2012 and 2013
- sick days paid for workers over 65
- letter of understanding to discuss benefit plan for retirees and workers over 65
- increases to parking rates in the final two years; single rates from \$50 to \$70 in 2014 and \$80 in 2015

L 235 - Community Living Meaford

A four-year renewal agreement effective April 1, 2010 expiring March 31, 2014, settled at mediation

- general wage increase \$0.28 April 1, 2012 and \$0.28 April 1, 2013
- educational stipend \$300, prorated for part time
- improved bereavement leave
- improved benefits
- new article: violence in the workplace

Sector 4 – Children's Aid Societies

L 116 - Children's Aid Society of London & Middlesex

A four-year renewal agreement effective April 1, 2012 expiring March 31, 2016, settled by direct bargaining

- general wage increase of 2.95% in the final two years
- bullying language included in the C.A., no longer an LOU
- workload improvements
- improved no contracting out language
- reimbursement for damage to employee vehicle claimed under insurance; increased to \$1000 from \$500

L 304 - York Region Children's Aid Society

A four-year renewal agreement effective April 1, 2012 expiring March 31, 2016, settled at conciliation

- general wage increase 0%, 0%, 2.95%, 2.95%
- health spending account; \$1000, \$1000, \$500 \$500
- mileage increase; fixed monthly rate of \$0.49 per km
- 1 additional vacation day
- workload improvements

L 454 - The Children's Aid Society of Ottawa

A four-year renewal agreement effective January 1, 2012 expiring December 31, 2015, settled at conciliation

- general wage increase of 2.95% and 2.95% in the final two years
- 12 month roll over language to create permanent positions
- mileage increased from \$0.43 to a new scale of \$0.48-\$0.56
- cell phone subsidy increased from \$38 to \$45 per month
- increase to the sick leave provision of 20 days after 5 years of service
- special leave increased from 3 to 5 days off with pay
- December 24th off with pay
- casual staff are guaranteed a min of 4 hours pay when called in to work
- strengthened job security language

Sector 5 - Community Agencies

L 258 - Saint Monica House

A four-year renewal agreement effective April 1, 2011 expiring March 31, 2015

- general wage increase 1% Apr/12; 1.5% Apr/13; 2% Apr/14
- lump sum payment in year 1 \$500 FT, \$400 PPT, \$100 PT
- mileage increase from \$0.40 to \$0.45
- discrimination/Harassment language
- new long term service lieu day—12 years of service

Sector 7 - Corrections

L 213 - Kinark Child and Family Services Syl Apps Youth Centre

A three-year renewal agreement effective April 1, 2010 expiring March 31, 2013, settled by conciliation

- general wage increase of 2% on April 1, 2012
- lump sum payment of \$500 FT, \$250 for PT over 520 hours, \$125 for PT under 520 hours and relief
- mileage increased from \$0.34 to reflect corporate policy
- increased sick days
- improvement to vision care

Sector 15 - Child Treatment Centres

L 441 - Children's Mental Health of Leeds and Grenville

A four-year renewal agreement effective April 1, 2011 expiring March 31, 2015

- general wage increase 2% Apr/13, 2% Apr/14
- signing bonus \$1500, prorated for part time and casual employees
- mileage increased from \$0.45 to \$0.46 April/12, \$0.47 April/13 and \$0.48 April /14
- increase to benefits; health professional services covered to a maximum of \$750 up from \$500, vision care increased from \$250 to \$350