



Together-Stronger

~Working Together to Strengthen our Local~

*Paramedical Professionals from Niagara Health System &
Hotel Dieu Shaver Rehabilitation Centre*

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President's Remarks:

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It is difficult to believe we are into February already.... 2015 was a busy year- with elections of our local executive, elections within the ranks of OPSEU, demand setting for our 2016 round of bargaining, activities of the Ontario Health Coalition and lobbying efforts to raise awareness of the need for greater support of our health care system....just to highlight some activities beyond the day to day business of our local.

Our number of signed members continues to support a fully booked off local president to work on your behalf ...but we are always needing to reach out to new and unsigned members to maintain this benefit and to ensure they have access to all of their rights and benefits as union members. Please direct new members to a union steward so that we can provide them with a welcome package and a union card.

We are entering into a new round of bargaining: our collective agreement (yes – the one not yet printed) will expire March 31, 2016. Just a reminder that our contract as well as the addendums (reflecting our 2014-2016 language changes) are found on our local website: www.opseulocal215.com under member resources.

Remember that your stewards and executive are here to support you. If you have concerns, reach out to a steward in your work area. The executive is listed on our local website.

If you need additional stewards for your work area - please contact me to arrange this. One positive change implemented in 2015 is that all stewards are invited to attend local executive meetings so that they can be informed and educated.

Brenda Allan

Hospital Professional Division (HPD) Updates

- ◆ Elections for the HPD executive took place in June 2015: Sara Labelle remains the chair of the division. New portfolios for benefits and WSIB appeals were added to create 2 additional positions. Brenda Allan joins this executive which will help to keep us informed and facilitate networking with other locals across the province and increase our local's activism at a higher level. See <https://opseu.org/sector/hospital-professionals>
- ◆ Many issues at our local level are the direct result of provincial funding and/or directives. As our post card campaign stated...hospitals and managers are forced to make difficult decisions....and we often witness the negative consequences.



- ◆ **HPD Media Campaign:** launched in January 2016. This campaign targets underfunding of hospitals and links to www.publicisbetter.ca —a website that all members are encouraged to visit. Through this campaign we hope to influence public opinion and pressure the Wynne government to reconsider hospital cuts in the upcoming provincial budget in 2016. Join the conversation online: LIKE and SHARE the video on Facebook; Tweet @publicisbetter by using the hashtag #notprivateclinics
- ◆ **Lobbying:** along with your HPD executive, Brenda has participated in lobby days at Queens Park and in Ottawa, meeting with MPs and MPPs to address our concerns regarding changes to our health care system. HPD chair and co-chair have also met with a lab services review panel. Your local has been represented at Regional days of action held across the province over the past year in St. Catharines, Ottawa, and Trenton and Hamilton. If you are interested in joining these events- email Brenda or keep posted to our local website www.opseulocal215.com
- ◆ Sara Labelle, Chair of HPD interviewed in January 2016 about the need for increased Hospital funding. Check out: <http://looniepolitics.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/loonie-politics-january-23rd-2015.mp3>
- ◆ **OHC Assembly Nov 21-22 2015-** HPD secured partial funding for participation in this important assembly regarding health care. Lisa Morabito and Brenda Allan attended.

HPD Bargaining Update

We participate in local and central bargaining. Our local demand set meeting was held in September 2015 and our central demand set was held in Toronto at the end of November 2015. Both bargaining units (NHS and Hotel Dieu) sent delegates to this meeting to ensure our proposed demands were tabled.

Next Steps:

Central bargaining: Bargaining begins - late April 2016.

Local bargaining: Bargaining dates can be set late May or June 2016.

Cards of Thanks

Thanks were received from the family we supported this past holiday season. The family was overwhelmed by your generosity. After 9 months of striking, Local 294 (employed by Care Partners, a private-for-profit community agency) were awarded the ability to proceed to arbitration to resolve their first contract. This contract, however, will expire March 31, 2016 and they may face similar hardship this coming year. Thank you for your support of these fellow OPSEU members.

Local Bylaw Update

Our local previously discussed and passed draft bylaws. Before submitting them for final OPSEU approval, your executive have made some additional amendments that will be brought back to you (the membership) for input and final decision. One change will expand the composition our local executive committee and allow the elections of unit stewards to occur prior to the General Membership meeting. This will ensure representation on the local executive from our various areas/groups and shorten the election process at this meeting (we will only need to elect the officers from among the already determined executive unit stewards). More information will be sent out for review prior to a membership meeting to discuss this.

Other

WSIB Update: With a scholarship from the Niagara Labour Council and support through the Hospital Professional Division of OPSEU Brenda Allan attended training for WSIB Level 1 & 2 (July 27-31/15) and WSIB Level 3 training (Appeals & Disputes) held over 6 days in October 2015. ***If are injured at work***- report the injury, file a form 6 and seek guidance from your union early in the process.

OFL, Injured Workers and Medical Professionals File Official Request for Ombuds Ontario Investigation into WSIB. See the report: <http://ofl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015.11.05-Report-WSIB.pdf>

Lancaster House Dec. 10th-11th 2015: Brenda Allan attended to receive updates on caselaw regarding various topics which are helpful in representation of members during investigations and step 2 grievances. Information is presented by both union and employer legal counsel. Day 2 focused on toxic personalities, investigations of harassment.

Frequently Asked Questions- A focus on rest and meal breaks

Q. When should I expect my unpaid meal break during my shift?

- A.** This falls under the employment standards act (ESA). “An employee must not work for more than five hours in a row without getting a 30-minute eating period (meal break) free from work”. If your shift begins at 0700 then your 30 minute, uninterrupted meal break should start no later than 1200.

Q. I often do not get my meal break in a timely manner due to workload, or I get called back from my meal break. What do I do?

- A.** If this is a repeated occurrence, speak to your manager to see how the work can be arranged or covered by another employee so that you take your break on time. If you are required to be available during your meal break, then you should be paid for the meal break. A true meal break should allow for you to be uninterrupted and leave your work area or the building if you wish.

Q. I was told we only get our paid breaks if patient care permits. Is this right?

- A.** You should receive your breaks... it is the time at which you take your paid breaks that are subject to the contingencies of patient care.

Q. I have chosen to miss my paid breaks...is there any harm in that?

- A.** There may be harm from missing your breaks. Without breaks, your concentration and performance may be impaired increasing your risk for a workplace injury or for errors that impact patient care and leave you vulnerable to discipline and/or injury.

Q. I don't think I need that break...This may not apply to me ...does it?

- A. Physical Benefits:** We can be our own worst enemy. We put patient care first...or believe we do. Research suggests that if you are a sedentary worker, your break time should be used to go for a short walk or other physical activity. If your job is strenuous you may benefit from a physical rest.
- A. Mental Benefits:** Research shows that taking your mind off your work (giving your mind some “down time”) has great benefit to blood flow in our brain and results in improved attention along with other benefits such improved motivation, productivity, creativity, memory and affords us time to rethink difficult situations we encountered so that we handle them better in the future. It also result in a higher level of engagement of employees. Interested in learning more? Read about Tony Schwartz’s Energy Project found in (<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/mental-downtime>)

Q. Workload often prevents me from taking breaks...what can I do?

- A.** Knowing that breaks benefit the employee, the patient and the employer.... speak to your manager and/your union steward in your work area to see how the work can be arranged or covered by another employee so that you take your breaks. The workload alert form can be used if there isn't resolution to workload issues (see workload resources: <http://www.opseulocal215.com/member-resources.html>).

When you have time for your break, take it. If you don't have time for your break, make it.