

Homecare

- Call action when first RFP is released – first attempt to privatize services since kick-off of our solidarity resolutions and protests across Ontario
- Develop and implement a lobby plan for our homecare position (on our website) – centrally and locally

Long Term Care

- Cross-province press conferences to set the issues & call for cross-province hearings
- Lobby on draft legislation
- Get ready for hearings
- Protest for staffing standard if necessary
- Research and release comparative data on staffing standards
- Issue media release protest of the privatization of more LTC beds through bidding announced in September

Mental Health

- Review and update OPSEU research papers on state of mental health
 - organize into key issues as per our the results of the mental health conference
- Do internal consultation and gather information on government timelines for Tier 3 divestment
- Reconvene and finalize documents and information, prepare for release
- Key issues include: moratorium on divestment, moratorium on movement to community if supports are not existing, LHINs/MOH must protect mental health funding, ensure mental health issues are dealt with in the long term care act, such as moving seniors with psychogeriatric issues to nursing homes

Dr. PJ Devereaux Awarded

The Ontario Health Coalition honoured Dr. PJ Devereaux with the Ethel Meade Award for excellence in research that has made an exceptional contribution to the public health system. Dr. Devereaux led the research team that conducted a meta-analysis of death rates in for-profit versus not-for-profit hospitals, among several other important recent studies. Dr. Devereaux is a professor in the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics at McMaster University.

Helen Havelik Awarded

Our warmest congratulations to Helen Havelik of the Sarnia Health Coalition and Charlotte's Taskforce on Rural Health. At this year's Assembly Helen was honoured with the Dan Benedict Award for commitment and community activism to protect and extend our universal public health system. Helen has been a tireless advocate for the Petrolia Hospital and a key volunteer with the Sarnia Health Coalition. She has helped to protect rural health services in her own community and is working with the health coalition's rural hospitals committee.

Dorothy Sauras Awarded

Dorothy received a special award for her volunteer work with the Ontario Health Coalition. Dorothy quietly work away at the health coalition almost every day. She has a long history of activism. She met Dr. Norman Bethune years ago in Montreal and is a great admirer of his. In honour of her commitment, the coalition gave Dorothy a replica of one of Dr. Bethune's paintings.

Ontario's New Long Term Care Act In Second Reading

The Ontario government has introduced its new Long Term Care Act. As of publication date, the bill has passed first reading and is at second reading. It is expected to be debated later in November and go to committee for hearings during the Christmas break. This would mean that hearings will likely be held in January. The bill will then proceed to third reading and will be passed in the spring.

The health coalition has drafted a set of key issues upon which to base our analysis of the legislation. We are encouraging all coalition members to contact their local MPPs regarding these issues. They were included in the last newsletter and can be found at: <http://www.web.net/~ohc/LongTermCare.htm>

- It is critically important that we use this opportunity to ensure that the government reinstates a minimum care standard for residents in Ontario's nursing homes. The previous Conservative government removed a regulation that provided 2.25 hours of care per day as a minimum standard for all residents. Since then, the acuity of residents has risen. A major report by PriceWaterhouse Coopers found that after the care standard was removed care levels in Ontario facilities fell below the previous standard while facility residents were getting older with more care needs. They found that Ontario had the oldest and sickest residents with the least amount of care in all the jurisdictions they studied. Each year in successive budgets the government has increased long term care funding by \$100 million or more, but it has never reinstated the care standard.
- Other jurisdictions are outpacing Ontario when it comes to care standards in long term care homes. 36 US states have introduced minimum care standards. Alberta has introduced a 3.6 hour per day minimum standard and will be moving up to 3.8. Saskatchewan has 3 hours minimum. Based on the acuity levels and the trends in other jurisdictions, we are advocating that the Ontario government move to a 3.5 hour minimum standard.
- The reintroduction of a care standard will ensure that residents, families and careworkers have an enforceable minimum to ensure that the government and facilities provide a level of hands-on care that prevents risk of harm to residents and staff.
- There will be only one new long term care act in the next decade or longer, so it is imperative now that we push to regain a regulated minimum care standard in long term care homes.

We will be releasing a full analysis of the legislation very shortly. It will be sent to all our members by email and will be available on our website. If you wish to be added to the email list, please send us a note at ohc@sympatico.ca.

