

NEWSBULLETIN

Provincial election/Huge win on nursing agencies/Thessalon hospital closure

Unity Health local (CUPE 5441) scores major win on agency nurses

In *Unity Health v CUPE, Local 5441*, <https://canlii.ca/t/k8z4d>, arbitrator Gedalof determined that the Hospital's use of agency RPNs and PSWs violated the collective agreement:

The arbitrator found that the Hospital was in fact the employer of these agency nurses. The implications of this decision are huge because if agency nurses are in fact hospital employees, they will have to be paid the same as the nurses employed by the hospital. Eliminating the use of agency nurses and increasing nurses' pay is key to solving the retention crisis in staffing.



Some of the CUPE hospital activists from Hamilton at the Ontario Nurses Association rally, Jan. 26, for nurse-patient ratios

Provincial election Feb. 27

Ontario spends less per person on its hospitals and long term care facilities than any province in the country. In the provincial election we have been raising this fact and what it means for peoples' health care services. Ask the 4 provincial parties what they will do to address:

People waiting for surgeries: 250,000

People waiting on stretchers every day for hospital beds: 1,860 (up from 850 when Premier. Ford promised to end hallway medicine in 2018)

People waiting for a long-term care bed: 50,000

New LTC beds built of 15,000 promised: 3,500

People without a family doctor: 2,500,000



200 citizens came out Feb. 8 to a public meeting to organize to save the Thessalon hospital, which is near Sault Ste. Marie.

All in-patient beds in Thessalon have been closed. A large rally was held February 20, with the support of the Ontario Health Coalition and OCHU/CUPE. CUPE represents the staff at the hospital.

Minden hospital site of Haliburton Highlands Health Centre has been closed for some time and residents of the town of Bracebridge are worried that their hospital will be closed also. Many rural hospitals are also struggling to keep their Emergency departments and other services running through a staffing crisis.

Provincial funding is below the rate of inflation this year and many hospitals are making cuts as a result. LTC staffing levels are well behind the levels set out in *The Time to Care Act*.

Health care workers also saw the Ford PC government attack our wages by imposing a wage freeze at a time of soaring inflation and during a pandemic when we were praised for our heroic service. Bill 124 was struck down by the courts and then scrapped by the government thanks to the relentless campaigning by health care workers against it.

Ask the candidates where they stand on wage freezes for public sector employees. Please challenge the candidates. Make your vote count.



Francophone Vice-president, Sue Pinel-Asselin, speaks to the media outside Health Sciences North in Sudbury Feb. 4, part of a provincial tour to raise health care during the provincial election