

ONA WINS



SUMMARY OF ANOTHER SUCCESS AS YOUR UNION STRIVES TO IMPROVE YOUR WORKING CONDITIONS

Professional Practice Win at Perth Community Care Centre

A team composed of front-line nurses, Labour Relations Officers, Professional Practice Specialists and others who banded together to work for its members achieved a phenomenal win for a group of members working in long-term care. Recently, this amazing team attained one of its best professional practice wins on behalf of residents at Perth Community Care Centre, a for-profit long-term care home.

Home overwhelmed with staff shortages

“This workplace was plagued with chronic staff shortages, insufficient baseline hours, poor leadership and communication, equipment and supply issues and a whole host of other problems,” says Professional Practice Specialist Andrea Fagan. “Resolving any of these issues required a major ONA push together. Most importantly were the nurses, who completed an astoundingly fulsome 345 Professional Responsibility Workload Report Forms dating back to 2017.”

Perth’s Bargaining Unit President Darlene Lawlor was squarely in the members’ corner, encouraging her members to complete the forms so the employer would take notice of the dreadful conditions for their residents. “Darlene was instrumental in building up our case for more nursing staff, more hours, and more supports for our residents,” notes Fagan. “Without her diligence, we would not have received this amazing win.”

Suggestions of an Independent Assessment Committee (IAC) loomed

After countless meetings between members and the employer, ONA filed a “notice of advancement to an IAC,” and awaited the employer’s response. Rather than proceeding to a costly and completely avoidable IAC, the employer agreed with ONA to try mediation, to see if there was any appetite to achieving a settlement.

“On the day of mediation, we were both at the table and, immediately, we knew that we were not on the same page as the employer,” says Fagan. “We thought this day was a total loss until we said to them again that ONA will call an IAC, which could lead to unwanted press, negative attention and a bottom-of-the-barrel reputation with staff.

“Suddenly, there was a 180-degree change in tone from the employer because they realized that ONA knew the facts and we had an extremely strong case. The employer had no choice but to agree to ONA’s recommendations. And agree, they did.”

Throughout mediation day, Fagan and her team checked in with Darlene and her bargaining unit members to ensure that they were satisfied with what was achieved. An overwhelming “yes” was their response.

“At the end of the day, we were on top of the world because our wins at mediation mean that the nurses can offer the kind of quality care they’ve been fighting to provide for their residents,” Fagan concludes, “It’s a great victory and now the residents can get the care they absolutely need and deserve.”

Change *IS* possible

Fagan notes that completing Professional Responsibility Workload Report Forms (PRWRF) is a vital step to obtaining a settlement. “The importance of filling out the forms demonstrates that this is not the kind of care that members want to provide. It is an impossible practice environment, and it’s always been this way in long-term care. Workload forms are such great proof of the dire conditions, but we need the submitted forms to start the process.

“I know it’s challenging – members are tired and burnt out, but it became another part of the day, and it almost became a normalized process, which is a sad state, but it needed to happen to make change. It is possible!”

ONA achieves binding settlement for Perth Community Care Centre members

During mediation, ONA and the employer agreed to:

- Adding a permanent full-time Registered Nurse (RN) Resource Nurse, above the baseline RN hours.
- The permanent addition of an extra three days for Resident Assessment Instrument (RAI) Coordinator to create a full-time RN role.
- Equipment improvements: each floor will be provisioned with two vital sign machines, two stethoscopes, two thermometers, two oxygen monitors, and two pill cutters per medication cart, one computer tablet for each personal support worker scheduled to work.
- Health and safety improvements including adding emergency outlets in each wing, regular mock fire drills on all shifts, provisioning of resident personal fall alarms and over-bed tables for activities of daily living, enhanced communication, and support during outbreaks.
- Education improvements including annual learning needs assessment, annual training on all required legislated training programs and opportunities for PIECES and General Persuasion Approach.
- Leadership and communication improvements including a designated email address for all nursing-related communication, standard information sharing of policies and procedures, daily walk-throughs and safety huddles, a minimum of once weekly email updates, formalized communication of equipment and supply issues to the Personal Support Workers (PSWs).
- Orientation improvements including: the employer to expressly inform new hires of their right for five orientation shifts and three added shifts as per the Collective Agreement, clarity regarding the orientation checklist as a support tool and not a performance review, all agency staff to receive the Perth Community Care Centre standardized agency orientation.

- Process improvements including: the addition of TENA list and brief sizing information binder, development of guidance document for end-of-shift medication cart transfer, commitment for call-in binder to be updated Monday to Friday.
- Physician-related improvements: mandatory meeting with all physicians, employer leadership and nurses to review best practices and College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) obligations regarding telephone and verbal orders.
- Amended RN and RPN job descriptions to recognize CNO Professional Standards accountabilities and remove any managerial duties.
- Increased employer responsibility related to scheduling processes and supply ordering and monitoring.
- Employer commitment to explore the Internationally Educated Nurses Supervised Practice Experience Partnership program with the CNO to enhance recruitment.
- Planning and progress updates towards implementing the provincial mandate of 4.0 hours per resident per day will be a standing item for all Labour-Management meetings.
- Binding settlement and enforceable through arbitration.
- Ability to advance to an Independent Assessment Committee hearing if PRWRFs related to this settlement continue and are unable to be resolved by January 12, 2023.

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