



Canadian Health Professionals Secretariat

Meeting Report

Ottawa

November 19-20, 2007

CANADIAN HEALTH PROFESSIONALS SECRETARIAT

Meeting Date: November 19-20, 2007
Location: Ottawa, Ontario

Participants

NSGEU/NUPGE

Michael Pronk
Lynette Johnson

NAPE/NUPGE

Gilbert Butt
Andy Parsons
Tracey Moore

AAHP

Patti O'Keefe
Sharon King
Bruce Callahan

PEIUPSE/NUPGE

Allan Davidson

NBUPPE/NUPGE

Debbie Lacelle

SGEU/NUPGE

Tracey Sauer

OPSEU/NUPGE

Rick Janson
Michele Dawson Haber
Anthony Morabito

MGEU/NUPGE

Lois Wales
Shelley Neel

MAHCP

Wendy Despins
Lee Manning
Shelagh Parken

HSAS

Chris Driol
Warren Chykowski
Karen Wasylenko

HSAA/NUPGE

Elisabeth Ballermann
Lynette McAvoy
Trudy Thompson

HSABC/NUPGE

Reid Johnson
Hans Brown
Rebecca Maurer

BCGEU/NUPGE

Stephen Morgan

NUPGE

Carol Meyer
Mike Luff
Louise Trépanier

Guest Speakers

James Clancy, NUPGE National President
Marc Zwelling, President, Vector Research and Development Inc.

Welcome and Introductions

Co-Chair Mike Luff welcomed participants to the 10th meeting of the Secretariat and participants introduced themselves. The report of the previous meeting and the agenda for the current meeting were reviewed and approved.

Presentation

By James Clancy, NUPGE National President

Clancy congratulated the member organizations of CHPS on their recent successes and thanked everyone involved for their strong leadership in ensuring the group continues to work together on common issues.

He presented a brief overview of labour relations and the political and legal environment across Canada and beyond. He urged participants to pay careful attention to the direct relationship between declining worker rights, the election of anti-worker governments, and trends in collective bargaining and organizing for unions.

Clancy briefed participants on NUPGE's analysis of the recent Supreme Court of Canada ruling that collective bargaining is a fundamental right protected by the Constitution. He noted that while the decision offered very positive and powerful language recognizing the legitimacy of labour rights as human rights in Canada, the substance of the decision is also limited. It is therefore very important that unions have a clear understanding of the scope, limitations and impact of this landmark ruling on current and future legal challenges. Clancy stressed the importance of the labour movement developing a strategic and coordinated approach to future *Charter* challenges involving labour rights. He also emphasized the need for the National Union and other unions to continue with its *Labour Rights are Human Rights* campaigns because they are critical to creating a positive environment for progressive political and legal decisions on labour rights.

Participants were also briefed on the National Union's ongoing campaign to defend and strengthen Canada's Medicare. Clancy outlined the campaign's main messages, targets, timelines and actions which are coordinated with various civil society allies across the country. He noted that the issue of shortages of health science professionals is one of the main messages of NUPGE's campaign. An overview of NUPGE's efforts to counter the pro-privatization message of the Canadian Medical Association and its newly elected president Dr. Brian Day was also provided. Clancy also described the National Union's efforts to work with pro-single-payer medicare groups in the United States, such as Physicians for a National Health Program.

Clancy announced that Elisabeth Ballermann has been named Co-Chair of CHPS. Ballermann is president of the Health Sciences Association of Alberta (HSA/NUPGE), a union representing more than 15,000 paramedical technical, professional, and general support employees in the public and private health care sectors of Alberta.

Clancy also updated participants on recent discussions with the Quebec-based union APTS and their relationship with CHPS.

Presentation and Workshop

By Marc Zwelling, President, Vector Research and Development Inc.

Co-Chair Luff provided the background and context for the presentation and workshop being led by Marc Zwelling. Luff noted that building the profile of health science professionals has been a main pillar of the CHPS mandate since the beginning. He provided an overview of many initiatives taken by CHPS to raise profile with politicians, public policy influencers and decision makers, and other unions and professional associations. He explained why it was now a good time for CHPS to turn its attention to how it can best raise the profile of its members with the general public. He noted that good public campaigns are based on good research and that CHPS had enlisted the assistance of Marc Zwelling to help kick-start the process.

Marc Zwelling is the president of Vector Research and Development, a company that specializes in public opinion research. Zwelling has been working with unions and other organizations for over 20 years, helping them develop the key strategies and messages that resonate with their members and the public.

Zwelling's presentation focused on four themes: (1) Various obstacles to raising the health science professionals' profile; (2) Health science professionals in the polls: what the public thinks; (3) general rules for raising public profile; and (4) the difference between reach and resonance when developing public profile.

In addition to the presentation, Zwelling worked with participants in workshops and discussions aimed at generating creative concepts to raise the profile of their members. Several good ideas emerged and the CHPS Co-Chairs agreed to bring the matter forward for further discussion at the next CHPS meeting.

Following the presentation and workshops, participants spent time presenting and discussing various public relations initiatives they've taken to raise the profile of their members.

Zwelling also provided participants with some additional resources to consult on how to raise public profile. A detailed handbook of Zwelling's presentation was also provided and an evaluation of the session was completed.

CHPS Communications and Research Activities

Co-Chair Luff provided an overview of the issues dealt with as follow-ups to the last meeting (a list of follow-ups is provided at the back of every CHPS meeting report).

He noted the diversity of issues covered by news releases including: collective bargaining, public policy, advocacy campaigns, public relations and membership surveys. Participants were reminded to send their communications material to Luff for posting on the CHPS website and direct distribution to other constituent organizations.

Luff walked participants through a new Medicare campaign booklet created by NUPGE. The booklet provides an analysis of the major issues in health care; it outlines NUPGE's

recommendations for reform including a national health human resources strategy to address labour shortages; and it provides a list of actions and resources for activists.

Luff highlighted several important research requests CHPS completed since the last meeting, including: wage rates for major categories; job descriptions and wage rates for Anesthesia Assistants; workplace policies and contract language dealing with mental stress in the workplace; and no-scent policies for workplaces.

Co-Chair Ballermann led a discussion about the recent *SOS Medicare conference*. She noted that NUPGE and CHPS had worked hard to ensure health science professionals played a prominent role and had a strong presence at the conference. Several CHPS participants who attended the conference shared their views and there was a consensus that it was definitely one of the best conferences on health care in a very long time. It was noted that a book was being published about the conference and the Co-Chairs committed to sending each participant a copy of the book.

Ballermann and Luff provided a brief overview of the recent NUPGE convention, which several CHPS participants had also attended. They noted that several resolutions dealing with health care and health science professionals were debated and passed at the convention. Participants received a leaflet outlining the main highlights of the convention.

There was further discussion about CHPS outreach activities around the CMA annual conference. It was agreed that CHPS will need to continue to monitor and respond to the pro-privatization agenda of the CMA and its new president Dr. Brian Day.

Participants also further discussed the implications of the recent Supreme Court of Canada ruling on collective bargaining rights.

Co-Chair Luff briefed participants on NUPGE's ongoing work with other progressive organizations to fight against the BC-Alberta Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA). He briefly outlined the potential impact of TILMA on public health care and health science professionals in terms of privatizing public services, licensing standards for health science professionals, and creating a disposable workforce.

Constituent Reports

The constituent reports focused on government climate, collective bargaining, strikes, campaigns, staffing, significant grievance decisions and other major developments. Copies of the reports were included in the meeting binders and are available by contacting Co-Chair Luff.

The Co-Chairs facilitated a discussion during which each union reviewed the highlights of their reports and answered questions. The participants were able to share strategies and information on key developments, challenges and concerns across the country. Many organizations are either facing or are in the aftermath of provincial elections, and are dealing with collective bargaining strategies accordingly. Media and coalition campaigns as a means of raising the profile of health professionals are still very popular amongst the CHPS constituents.

Follow Ups

Issue	NUPGE/CHPS Responsibility	Constituent Union Responsibility	Task Completed
Report of the meeting	Draft and circulate		✓
Potential next steps Re: raising profile workshop	Bring proposal to next meeting		✓
SOS Medicare Conference	Purchase and circulate book of conference, including speaking notes for CHPS Co-Chair Elisabeth Ballermann		✓
Info. about Anesthesia Assistants	Circulate to those interested in receiving the material		✓
Dental Fee Increases for 2007	Circulate a chart		✓
Information on the safe needles campaign	Collect and circulate		✓
Update on the OPSEU/NUPGE Sonographer ergonomics study	Collect and circulate	OPSEU/NUPGE will send information to Mike Luff	✓