

# THE UNION ADVANTAGE

The National Union and its Components represent more home care workers than any other union in Canada.

With large numbers of home care workers as members across the country, we can effectively lobby and campaign for a national home care system that treats its workers fairly and with dignity!

One of the most obvious improvements to the lives of home care workers when they organize is higher wages and benefits.

And unionization helps provide home care workers with a voice in the debates over the future of the sector.

Want to know more about the issues confronting home care and home care workers see:

[www.nupge.ca/home\\_care.htm](http://www.nupge.ca/home_care.htm)



national  
union

## *NATIONAL UNION OF PUBLIC AND GENERAL EMPLOYEES*

- B. C. Government and Service Employees' Union
- Health Sciences Association of British Columbia
- Health Sciences Association of Alberta
- Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union
- Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union
- Ontario Public Service Employees Union
- Canadian Union of Brewery and General Workers
- New Brunswick Union of Public and Private Employees
- Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union
- PEI Union of Public Sector Employees
- Newfoundland & Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees

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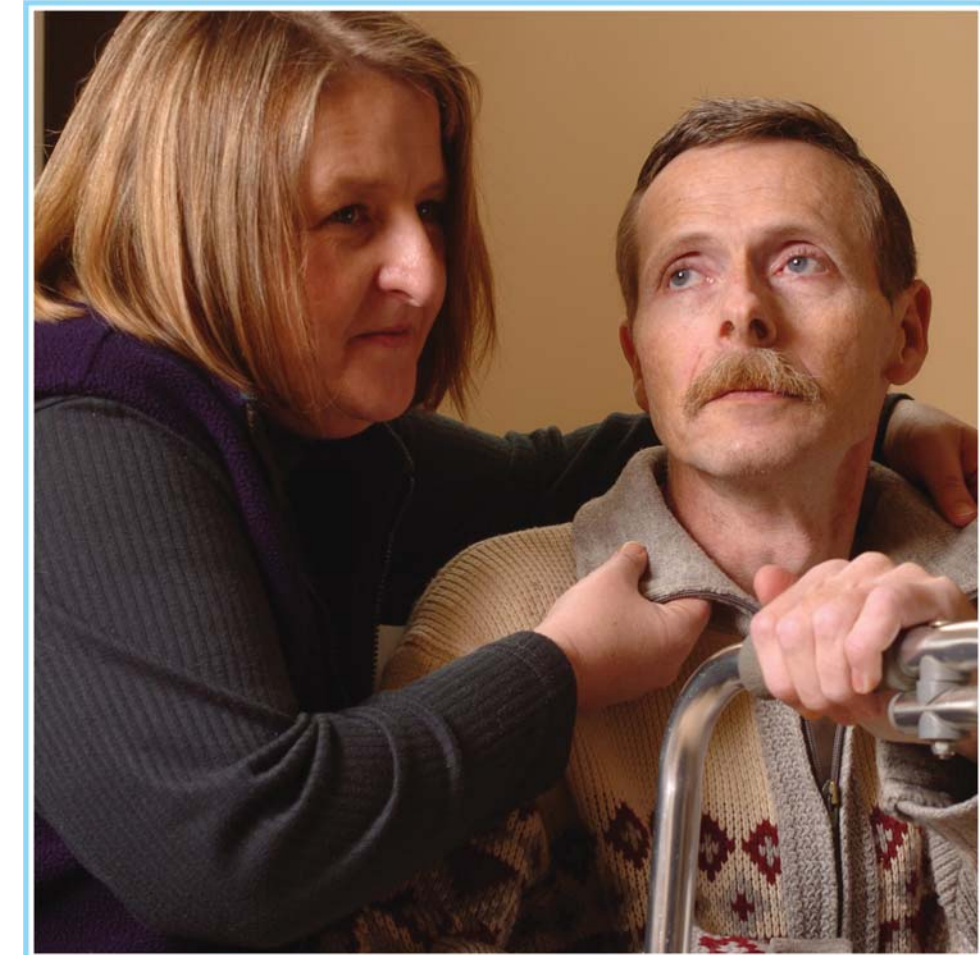
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The National Union of Public and General Employees is an affiliate of the Canadian Labour Congress and a member of the Public Services International

# Home Care



We **do** make house calls



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March 2004

# The work you do



## Home care workers are the front line of our health care revolution

HEALTH CARE used to be something you had to leave home to get. Not any more.

Now nearly 700,000 Canadians get their health care at home thanks to visiting home care workers. It's all part of our health care revolution that started about 10 years ago.

Health care is no longer primarily focused on acute care and large facilities. It is now being increasingly provided in the community.

Patients are being discharged from hospital earlier than in the past. More illnesses can be treated in the home — allowing greater independence for many. People like and want to receive treatment in the comfort of their own home. And home care can be a cost-effective way to deliver high quality health care to Canadians.

For all these reasons the demand for home care has grown dramatically — as has the importance placed on it by governments. Home care is one of the fastest growing professions in the health care sector.

As home care services are increasingly sought after, the nature of the job has changed. Home care workers are seeing patients with more complex medical problems. Technological innovations in health care require that home care workers be trained on cutting edge equipment. Growing demand for accountability requires more and more time spent on filing reports and updating charts.

### Many challenges, not so many rewards

HOME SUPPORT work can be one of the most difficult jobs in the world. It can also be one of the most emotionally rewarding.

Canada's home care workers bring their skill and compassion to help people in their own homes. It is a highly valued service in much demand. Yet, home care workers get too little in return. They are often not treated with the respect or given the support they deserve.

The demands of the job continue to increase — but training, compensation and basic respect do not.

# The respect you deserve



## Long hours, hard work, low wages — it's a funny way to show respect

IT'S A MIRACLE we have any home care workers left. The government push to get them to do more and more with less and less is relentless. The results are not good for home care workers or their clients.

- Most workers are spending more time travelling from client to client.
- They are working more erratic schedules, stretched out over longer and longer portions of the day.
- Home care workers provide care to hundreds of thousands of Canadians yet tend to receive lower wages, fewer benefits and work under more difficult conditions than their

counterparts in institutions, long-term care facilities and extended care homes.

- The turnover rate for home care workers is a serious problem.
- Most home care workers want to continue in their jobs but simply cannot afford to remain in a low-wage position. Once trained, many home care workers take employment in the more traditional settings where they will be paid better with better working conditions.

All of this means client care suffers. Home care workers are able to spend less time helping their clients. Caring relationships have difficulty developing when the worker is always on the run — or when the home care worker changes from week to week.



RESPECT comes in many forms. Union members know them all: from bigger pay cheques; to a real say in what you do and how you do it; to making major inputs into shaping the future of the whole home care sector.

### A HOME CARE WORKER WHO JOINS A UNION WILL USUALLY

- make more than \$2 an hour, more than non-union workers
- be paid for overtime worked (25% more likely)
- be paid for cancelled shifts (almost twice as likely)
- work fewer unpaid hours
- feel able to use all her/his skills more often
- stay working for the same agency longer