



MEMO

The Participation House Project (Durham Region)
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DATE: Thursday May 30th, 2019
TO: All Employees
FROM: Michelle Marshall, Executive Director
RE: Commitment to Continuous Communication
Information Sharing and Updates

Good Morning All,

I wrote to you yesterday to give you an update on the status of negotiations. Things are happening very quickly now and with a potential **strike only 10 days away** (Monday, June 10, 2019), it is very important that you know what is going on and what's on the table.

I presented your CUPE Rep with our final offer on Tuesday. This offer included very generous enhancements to your compensation. This offer expired at Midnight last night after being refused by the Union/CUPE.

Strike Preparation Costs = Reduced Compensation for Employees

The last thing that I wanted to do is waste money on strike preparation and service continuity planning. Unfortunately, CUPE has left us with no choice. The CUPE's demand for a No Board Report means **a strike could begin as early as June 10th**. We have delayed strike preparation as long as possible in the hopes that the Union would accept our Final Offer or make proposals that were in any way possible for us to accept. Unfortunately, they didn't and we were forced to put stipend money towards strike preparation instead of in to the pockets of our employees.

Our Final Offer Remains Very Generous to All Employees

The total package of enhancements includes:

- i) 2018-2019 Stipends: FT - \$1000, PT - \$850, Casual - \$500.
- ii) 2019-2020 Stipends: FT - ~~\$1000~~ 800, PT - ~~\$850~~ 500, Casual - ~~\$500~~ 150 (**stipends decreased from previous offer due to strike prep costs incurred starting May 31st**)
- iii) 2020-2021 - \$0.20 wage increase (stipends for O/N staff FT – 500, PT 300, Cas 250)
- iv) 2021-2022 - \$0.24 wage increase (stipends for O/N staff FT – 500, PT 300, Cas 250)
- v) One (1) additional Float Day per year
- vi) Employer Pension Plan contributions increased from 3.5% to 4% of wages.
- vii) Options for O/N staff to apply stipends to voluntary enrollment in DSW apprenticeship.
- viii) Increase in mileage rates from \$0.47/km to \$0.50/km (agreed on Oct. 22, 2018)

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- ix) Increase in Education Allowance from \$75.00 to \$150.00 (agreed on Oct. 22, 2018)
- x) New meal allowance for up to \$20.00 for extended shifts (agreed Sept. 11, 2018)
- xi) New processes related to purchase of benefits for Part Time staff (agreed Sept. 11, 2018)

No Concessions

Our proposal would not involve reductions in compensation for any current staff. The so-called “concessions” your CUPE rep objects to relate to our proposal to create a new classification for overnight (O/N) counsellors that accurately reflects the qualifications (no DSW requirement), effort and responsibilities (less than DSPs) and appropriate pay rates for overnight awake work.

To be clear, under our proposal, employees currently performing overnight work would continue to receive the same pay they currently enjoy **\$23.15** per hour, despite working when most of the people we support are asleep.

No current staff would have their pay or benefits reduced, their high wage rates would be maintained, and they would all receive significant enhancements.

Fair Pay for NEW O/N staff

New O/N counsellors would still be paid a very generous and competitive wage for the work they perform (between \$20.20 and \$20.80 per hour), which is **significantly above what many other DS employers pay for overnight awake work.**

New O/N's would not be paid the same as our DSPs because their work is **not equal in qualifications, skill, effort or responsibility** to the more challenging and demanding work performed by DSPs who serve the people we support when they are awake and require active supports.

Some agencies pay their overnight staff around \$7.00 per hour less than day support staff and many of these organizations pay less than \$20.00/hr. That is not what we are proposing.

Fair Wages for NEW O/N Staff = Ability to Offer Enhancements to ALL Staff

We have **no new base funding** to pay for wage enhancements.

It is widely speculated that the Ford Government will introduce **wage caps** for publicly funded employers and **cuts to funding.**

Even if our existing funding isn't cut (which we believe is unlikely), the only way we can possibly provide the enhancements outlined above for our employees is through paying NEW O/N staff a fair but lower wage than DSPs for work that requires less skill, effort and responsibility.

If we don't realize these savings we can't agree to the additional enhancements outlined above and we can't ensure job security for ALL.

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Final Offer Vote Requested

We don't want our employees to **continue to lose out** on the funds we have set aside for stipends and enhancements because the Union refuses to consider cost saving measures that **benefit ALL of our current employees**.

Our proposals are fair, reasonable and will ensure **significant improvements** in total compensation for **ALL employees**.

Our existing wage rates are at the **higher end of wages for all DS employers** across the province. Despite what CUPE says, our employees when surveyed anonymously have consistently said that our compensation is competitive and that they are happy with PH as an employer. That's why we have received the Employer of Choice award 3 years in a row!

We don't want you to go on strike!

- A strike could happen as early as Monday, June 10th.
- A strike is bad for our employees – more of the funding we would otherwise put in our employees' pockets will go to service continuity costs – we must continue to support the people in our care!
- A strike is bad for the people we support – stress, confusion, picketing, conflict, inconsistency of supports are all bad for their health, safety and overall well-being. We know that you care and that is not what you really want!
- A strike is bad for the entire PH family – that includes you!

That's why we've asked the Minister of Labour to arrange and conduct a **supervised vote** on our Final Offer – hopefully before a strike begins.

This will give you the opportunity to express your opinion and, if you wish, **vote yes** to accept the offer that CUPE has refused.

We will be in touch with further details as soon as we have information to share regarding the vote.

Thank you for your attention.

Kind regards,

Michelle