

Prevention is Protection

CASe Notes



A BULLETIN FOR OPSEU MEMBERS IN CAS

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Stand up! Stand proud! Stand together!

In the stressful work environment typical of the Children's Aid Society it's often easy to forget that you are not alone, even though it may seem at times that we occupy siloes. OPSEU represents more than 3,500 CAS workers across Ontario representing 10 bargaining units. From Sarnia-Lambton in the southwest to Cornwall in the east; from Sudbury and Northeastern Ontario to the GTA in the south, we have far more in common than we might imagine.

Despite those numbers it can often seem like we work in isolation from our colleagues, whether we are frontline workers or those who provide support services.

Fact is, we share more in the workplace that unites us than what might divide us. Regrettably, however, issues like mounting workloads -- caused by layoffs and funding cutbacks -- can create conflict among individuals.

The union recognizes that workplace stressors are a systemic problem, not an individual problem. In many cases, workers



feel like that they are bearing the burden on their own. For example, workload is a management issue and yet in some instances workers are being disciplined for not having up to date case notes, when in fact they are being assigned cases well above recommended benchmarks.

There is no easy remedy to ease divisions in the workplace when caseloads pile up beyond acceptable limits. But that doesn't mean we don't stop trying by using valuable tools like grievances, workload alerts, tabling workload at labour-management meetings and other union measures that have a proven track record of success.

Together we need to pushback against unacceptable workloads for a host of reasons; foremost, to remind ourselves that they only serve to divide us and not to draw us closer as valued child protection workers who share a common vision.

Important upcoming dates

In the spirit of working together for our common good, CAS members in OPSEU should be aware of a couple of important upcoming leadership meetings.

On April 23-24 members of our CAS Bargaining Council will meet in Toronto. The bargaining council draws representatives from all of OPSEU's CAS locals (about 20 members in all) along with members of the divisional executive to discuss bargaining strategy and campaign mobilizing. Reps also use the occasion to exchange ideas on how we can put your priorities at the centre of future campaigns and mobilizing efforts.

On May 8-10 CAS delegates, alternates and observers will gather in Toronto for OPSEU's annual Convention. Together, more than 1,000 OPSEU member-activists, representing more than 500 bargaining units, will participate. More than 30 CAS delegates and associated reps will meet in caucus on May 8 to review the year behind us, and plans for the year ahead.



Send in your stories from the frontlines!

Your divisional executive is urging members to send us your “stories from the frontlines.” As we all know too well rapid changes are unfolding at the CAS thanks to underfunding, mounting workloads and unnecessary layoffs of skilled workers. The Minister of Children and Youth Services, Teresa Piruzza, needs to be told what’s really taking place in the workplace that is adversely affecting the wellbeing of our clients, their families and the communities in which they live.

Please share your stories and take a stand for child protection. Suggested length: 500 words.

Where do I write my story?

- Ask your local president or highest ranking for the CAS template. It is editable. Your story can be handwritten or typed.

Is my anonymity guaranteed?

- No identifying information will be collected (i.e. names of clients, workers or agencies).
- Please send your story directly to OPSEU, Attn: Luisa Quarta, OPSEU Campaigns Officer, lquarta@opseu.org/ by mail: OPSEU, 100 Lesmill Road, Toronto, ON M3B 3P8.
- You can email it to your local president/ highest ranking who will pass it on.

How will my story be used?

- Stories from across the province will be compiled and will be delivered to the Minister of Children and Youth Services, Teresa Piruzza. They may also be used in CAS central campaign materials.

On April 2, wear black to work!

As part of OPSEU’s ongoing campaign to draw attention to increasing workloads, funding cutbacks and layoffs, CAS members in ALL locals are urged to wear black to work on Wednesday April, 2. The first Wednesday of each month has been designated for this workplace action and, to-date, the response by members has been outstanding!

Let’s all stand together for child protection services that we can be proud of. We know that investing in prevention reduces the need for protection.

