

OPSEU represents more than 25,000 paramedical employees in over 75 hospitals in Ontario.

# Why join OPSEU?

Here are 10 good reasons for hospital professionals

## REASON #1

### PROTECTION FOR HOSPITAL PROFESSIONALS

Your work is governed by a regulatory college. The college's job is to protect the public; OPSEU protects you, the medical professional. We are committed to ensuring our members get fair treatment when facing any challenge to their livelihood. OPSEU members get experienced representation throughout the regulatory complaint process.

OPSEU members also have exclusive access to our group Professional Liability Insurance plan. It provides \$1 million in liability insurance for only \$30 per year, with an option to increase to \$5 million for \$70 per year.

## REASON #2

### POWER IN CENTRAL BARGAINING

Our hospital professionals can choose to participate in a central bargaining process. There is stronger bargaining power in larger numbers, and OPSEU members in more than 60 hospitals now bargain directly with the Ontario Hospital Association. This option to join central bargaining is available after your local reaches its first collective agreement with your employer, if both OPSEU and your hospital agree.

You can't lose: Should your hospital now provide you with practices, terms or conditions that are seen as superior to those in our central agreement, contract language allows you to keep those in place.

Are you getting close to retirement? OPSEU has been fighting for benefits for retirees for years. We now have provisions that provide benefits for retirees (50/50 co-pay) – a huge gain for OPSEU members.



**ONTARIO'S UNION  
FOR CHANGING TIMES**

## REASON #3

### LOCAL FLEXIBILITY

Additional local agreements contain provisions that apply only to your hospital, such as shift scheduling, which can remain flexible. Some establish scheduling committees where workers meet regularly with their employer for meaningful input into departmental scheduling. Local provisions may also include uniform allowances, travel between sites, and backfilling absences, among other items.

## REASON #4

### THE OPSEU WAGE ADVANTAGE

It is a statistical fact that union wage rates are higher than those paid to non-union workers. The provincial government's recent public sector wage freeze resulted in many non-unionized employees getting no wage increase for four years. During that same period, OPSEU hospital professionals earned lump sum payments in the first two years, followed by a 2.75 per cent wage increase. OPSEU members also received wage increases in the following two years and are now preparing to bargain a new collective agreement.

In the past, your pay rate may have kept pace with the "OPSEU rates" that set the industry standard for your sector. Some hospitals may pay higher wages; usually, however, this comes with a price: inferior benefits and less vacation entitlement. There is no legal obligation for a hospital to negotiate with non-union workers or to provide them with the same increases negotiated with unionized staff.

## REASON #5

### MANAGING YOUR WORKLOAD

As a hospital professional, you should be concerned about workload. When you are continually asked to do more and your department is short-staffed, your job can become unmanageable – and may put you at risk. You need the meaningful input and legal process that the OPSEU collective agreement provides. Our Workload Alert Notification form creates a record and enables the union to resolve these issues at Joint Health and Safety Committee and Labour Management Committee meetings.

## REASON #6

### PROTECTING YOUR JOB

No union can promise complete job security, but OPSEU members have many options to minimize the effect of layoffs and restructuring. If your work is contracted out, privatized or transferred to another hospital, you will have legal representation and contract protection throughout the process. Unionized workers also have “successor rights” – the right to follow your work to a new employer, along with your union contract.

OPSEU also provides opportunities for members that have been laid off to apply for positions at other hospitals represented by OPSEU. If a hospital decides to lay off employees, OPSEU members get at least three months’ notice. The hospital must first offer early retirement with enhanced severance for senior employees, in order to allow junior employees to remain in their positions.

Layoffs must respect seniority, and our contract gives you “recall rights” for two years in which the hospital must offer you a position for which you are qualified. Should you choose not to remain on a recall list, you are eligible for a separation allowance and for reimbursement for tuition fees.

## REASON # 7

### INPUT AND COLLABORATION ON AN EQUAL BASIS

Voting for OPSEU is not a vote *against* your hospital and their management team. It’s a vote for your right to negotiate the terms and conditions of your employment. Your collective agreement gives you the legal right to pursue a remedy and to solve problems. It allows for joint labour-management meetings where your employer and your elected representatives meet on an equal footing to discuss workplace issues and make significant improvements.

## REASON # 8

### PUBLIC ADVOCACY AND CONSULTATION

Health care is not just doctors and nurses: Our positive public profile allows OPSEU to press for greater awareness of the work you do. Hospital Professionals were in the spotlight as OPSEU participated in the inquiry following the SARS outbreak. We fought successfully for safer sharps. Most

recently, OPSEU’s Hospital Professionals Division met with the Ministry of Health to discuss threats like Ebola and MRSA.

OPSEU has a long history battling privatization and the negative impacts of hospital restructuring - and our campaigns succeed: Because OPSEU members raised their voices publicly, the hospital in Leamington kept its obstetrics department and the Kincardine hospital maintained physiotherapy services.

## REASON #9

### GOOD VALUE FOR THE MONEY

OPSEU dues are among the very lowest of any union. We do more for you – for less. Our dues are 1.375 per cent of your gross salary, period. There is no initiation fee. Union dues are tax deductible, and you pay no union dues until we have negotiated your first collective agreement.

## REASON #10

### MORE LEGAL RIGHTS -AND MANY BONUS REASONS!

Individual workers tend to overestimate their legal protections, and underestimate what it would cost if they had to enforce their rights. Once you are an OPSEU member, your union helps to enforce your rights: employment standards, pay equity, occupational health and safety and human rights laws. And you will enjoy new rights under the laws that apply only to unionized workers: the Ontario Labour Relations Act and the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act

We have dozens of professional staff with expertise in pensions, benefits, health and safety, equity issues, and more. OPSEU has two official representatives on the governing board of HOOPP.

Being a member of a large group means buying power: You will have access to attractive discounts on home and car insurance, wireless services, travel, and entrance fees for the Royal Ontario Museum and the Ontario Science Centre, which are also staffed by OPSEU members.

OPSEU also offers annual scholarships to members and/or their dependents. OPSEU invites all members to participate fully in our dynamic and democratic union. We provide extensive union training opportunities, at no cost to our members. Choices range from full weekends to three-hour courses and on-line learning.

Once you have time to review all the information  
we are confident that you will agree that

OPSEU is the *right* Union for you.