



# PHOLINE

A Newsletter for the OPSEU/SEFPO Members of Public Health Ontario

## BARGAINING BULLETIN NO. 3

### Message from the President and First Vice-President/Treasurer

We want to express our sincere thanks to all of you – the specialists of the laboratory world – for the sacrifices you continue to make to meet the surging demand for testing. We know it’s been a roller-coaster ride for you: you’re now carrying out more tests than any other lab in the province. That’s very impressive.

But it’s not only you who have made important sacrifices. Your family and friends have also had to do without you as you work extended days and overnight. They, too, are part and parcel of the heroism that is helping us to finally slay COVID-19. We send our appreciation to all of them.

But rather than receiving the recognition you deserve, you’re constantly asked to do more with less. There just aren’t enough lab workers in Ontario. There has to be a massive awareness and recruitment drive so that your working conditions don’t get even worse after the pandemic as more of you take well-deserved retirement. To be successful, compensation needs to be hiked significantly.

That’s why we were very happy and proud to have written a letter to request exemption for you from the compensation limits in Bill 124. We believe this legislation is unconstitutional, and we’ve launched a Charter challenge to right this terrible wrong. We await a response

and will apprise you of it once we get it.

On another note, we want to express our support for our members who are battling a serious COVID outbreak at Local 545 lab on University Avenue. We are extremely concerned for your well-being.

Your hardworking bargaining team will soon be face-to-face with the employer to fight for your working rights. We want to assure everyone that the union’s extensive resources will be at your disposal every step of the way. That’s a promise that doesn’t need testing.

In solidarity,



Warren (Smokey) Thomas  
President, OPSEU/SEFPO

Eduardo (Eddy) Almeida  
First Vice-President/Treasurer,  
OPSEU/SEFPO



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## Message from your Bargaining Team Chair

As we continue to battle the third wave, we want to thank you for your tireless dedication to keeping up with the extreme demand for testing, which has been the foundation of all other pandemic-related efforts. Without the incredible efforts you make, our province would be fairing far worse today. As you fight on the front lines, we here at OPSEU/SEFPO continue to fight for you at the bargaining table to ensure your demands are heard.

## Bargaining update

Your bargaining team was scheduled to meet with the Employer to begin bargaining April 26, 29, 30 and May 7. Late last week on April 22, we heard from the Employer, saying they needed to postpone bargaining until at least May 18, 2021, as their bargaining mandate had not been approved by the Treasury Board.

This was very surprising, disappointing and upsetting to hear. We booked these bargaining dates several weeks ago. As you know, our collective agreement expired on March 31, 2020. We have had delays in getting to the bargaining table in a timely manner because of the pandemic, but this delay is very frustrating.

We will be looking for new dates to meet with the Employer and will report back in our next bulletin once those dates have been scheduled.

## OPSEU/SEFPO's Bill 124 exemption request letter

In our last bulletin, we reported that we would be writing to the government to seek an exemption from Bill 124, which limits public sector compensation to one per cent per year. OPSEU/SEFPO has now submitted that letter of exemption to the Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy, President of Treasury Board Secretariat.

We seek this exemption, because we know how hard our members have worked throughout this pandemic to keep Ontarians safe. Our members have worked countless hours, processed millions of tests, and stepped up to the plate to work 24/7 to keep up with testing demand.

## National Medical Laboratory Week

A few weeks ago, you celebrated an important annual commemoration. At this time, we renew our thanks to you – our medical laboratory professionals – for all that you are, all that you do. We're so proud of you, now more than ever in these tough times. You constantly motivate us to get the best possible contract for you and yours. Keep up the good work! Keep up the good fight! We'll keep fighting for you

## Let's stay in touch!

Feel free to reach out to the Bargaining Team if you have any bargaining-related questions or concerns, and keep an eye out for more bargaining updates on [Facebook](#) and our [Sector 19](#) webpage! If you know someone who is not receiving these communications, please ask them to email [opseucommunications@opseu.org](mailto:opseucommunications@opseu.org) to subscribe.

## In Solidarity,

### Your Bargaining Team

#### Omid Nouri

Bargaining Team Chair  
Local 545 (Toronto)  
[omidnouri301@yahoo.com](mailto:omidnouri301@yahoo.com)

#### Casey McGuire

Bargaining Team Vice-Chair  
Local 412 (Ottawa)  
[kc.mcguire1374@gmail.com](mailto:kc.mcguire1374@gmail.com)

#### Shah Nawaz

Local 545 (Toronto)  
[shahnawaz.l@gmail.com](mailto:shahnawaz.l@gmail.com)

#### Selfa Pyentam

Local 113 (London)  
[selbarry@yahoo.com](mailto:selbarry@yahoo.com)

#### Raul Chicas

Local 545 (Toronto)  
[raulchicas@gmail.com](mailto:raulchicas@gmail.com)



To join OPSEU/SEFPO's email list, or to get a membership card, please contact your Local Executive.

For more information:

1-800-268-7376 [www.opseu.org](http://www.opseu.org)

Authorized for distribution by:

Warren (Smokey) Thomas,  
OPSEU/SEFPO President