
Charlottetown Area Office, 100 Capital Drive, Charlottetown, PEI C1E 1E7

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 18th, 2009

**Government Refuses to Permit Union Representatives
on Build Teams for NEW “Model of Care”
and the “Integrated Health Services Program” (IHSP)**

Charlottetown – “The Provincial Health Council of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), consisting of four CUPE Locals (805, 1051, 1778 & 1779), along with other health unions on PEI, have consistently been stonewalled by the Ghiz Government in our efforts to be full participants in the creation of, and planning for, the new ‘Model of Care’ under the government’s “Integrated Health Services Plan” (IHSP),” says Bill McKinnon, CUPE National Representative.

CUPE represents 950 health care workers on Prince Edward Island. The majority of our membership are support service staff in areas such as Dietary, Housekeeping, Laundry and Maintenance in all the hospitals, manors and addictions services on the Island.

“Since January of this year we have been requesting, time and again, to have representatives for each of the four health unions to sit on the Build Teams and the Steering Committee for the IHSP and new ‘Model of Care’. In spite of that, government and their representatives continue to refuse to allow our representatives on these Committee/Teams. Managers, supervisors and even staff members – chosen by the Employer – are included and are participating, which we have no quarrel with. However, we believe we should have the right to name one representative from each union on each committee/team as well. One committee had over 70 members on it. Surely four more members wouldn’t add any greater burden!

Further, based on the Premier’s consistent messaging for inclusion and consultation, one would expect that the government would want the Union’s to be full participants. We would expect government would want our input before decisions are made on a new system that will directly affect the people that we represent and who will ultimately be expected to make the new Model work! It’s a ‘no-brainer’ from where we stand.

Unfortunately all we have been offered, after numerous meetings and letters being exchanged on the topic, is a basic labour relations forum where Employer representatives, after the fact, ‘spoon feed’ the Union leadership information on decisions already made and on processes already determined and which they feel is appropriate. Consequently, we have no way to confirm the veracity, quality, or comprehensiveness of that information.

The result has been a great deal of unnecessary stress for the health care workers we represent due to a flurry of rumours, innuendoes and misinformation flying through the system with no way for the democratically elected Union leadership and representatives to separate fact from fiction.

The consequences of these government choices, if they remain unchanged, have the potential of putting us needlessly on a collision course,” concluded McKinnon. (See letter attached to Minister Currie).

**For more information, or an interview, please contact:
Bill McKinnon at (902) 566-4006 or (902) 439-1055**

Attachment

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VIA FAX 368-4416 & MAIL

November 18, 2009

The Honourable Doug W. Currie
Minister of Health
2nd Floor
11 Kent Street
P.O. Box 2000
Charlottetown, PE
C1A 7N8

Dear Minister Currie:

Re: Your Letter dated November 9th, 2009 – IHSP and Model of Care

This correspondence is further to your letter to me dated November 9th, 2009 regarding your response to the Health Unions' general request to participate in the Steering Committee and the Build Teams for the Integrated Health Services Program (IHSP).

There are a number of areas on your November 9th document that either misrepresented the facts and/or otherwise compelled me to reply.

For the record, the Health Unions - including CUPE's four individual health care Locals (805, 1051, 1778 & 1779) - as a Coalition have been consistent in our message and concerns regarding the process your government has undertaken in developing and implementing your IHSP plan. These concerns have existed since we were first asked to meet with government representatives on January 19th, 2009.

Our main frustration from the start has been the fact that the Unions have been denied the right to appoint one representative from each respective Union to the Steering Committee and the Build Teams. This in spite of the fact that the Employer (The Department of Health) has had the full input and participation, of not only their Human Resource and legal experts throughout on the Steering Committee and Build Teams, but the supervisors and managers of your choice as well.

What have the Union's been offered? Nothing with respect to representation of our choice on those same committee and teams.

PAUL MOIST – National President / Président national CLAUDE GÉNÉREUX – National Secretary-Treasurer / Secrétaire-trésorier national

MARIO GERVAIS – DONALDA MacDONALD – BARRY O'NEILL – KEVIN REBECK – PATRICK (SID) RYAN – General Vice-Presidents / Vice-présidents généraux



Yet, in the face of the above noted "facts" you make the following inaccurate statement in your letter in paragraph one, the fourth sentence, *"It was our understanding that all four unions did not endorse continuing with the joint forum until the demands for union control over employee selection on teams were met."*

Mr. Currie, frankly I was shocked to read that piece of your letter, particularly in the face of the reality that all the Health Unions met with you and Premier Ghiz on June 3rd, 2009 and we made it clear, at that time, that we were not trying to control who the Employer appointed to these committees and teams, including rank and file employees, just that the Unions were asking for one representative each, in addition to those appointed by government. Moreover, I distinctly recall making the statement that we didn't expect government to take anyone off of the committees and teams to make room for our representatives.

We further pointed out at that meeting (if you recall) that one of the committees had over seventy (70) people on it and that adding four more shouldn't cause any disruption on that, or any, of the committee/teams. The impression I was left with after that meeting was that you and the Premier were going to look into seeing if that objective could be accommodated for the Unions. Unfortunately, the first communication any of us received from your office thereafter was your letter making the statement above, which I found most disappointing.

The next portion of your communication which I found remarkable is indicated on page two in the first sentence of paragraph two wherein you state *"There was a strong commitment made by my Department to engage front line staff, physicians, management **and unions in the development of the model of care.**"*

In fact, if you review our coalition letter dated October 29th, 2009 at paragraph one, sentence two, you will find the following statement *"To date, the health sector unions have not received any specific details regarding the implementation of this "new" model of care nor have they been consulted in any manner."*

With a view to all the communication that has occurred (written and face to face) before this letter, I would respectfully ask you, where and when have the unions been engaged in the development of the model of care?

With due respect Minister Currie, either your statement is inaccurate or your Department has failed miserably at fulfilling its commitment to the health unions, who represent thousands of your Department's employees.

In the result, CUPE wishes to advise you, that we remain open and willing to participate in the IHSP process but only when our status as the legal bargaining agent for our members is properly recognized and respected at all stages of the development and implementation of the IHSP process.

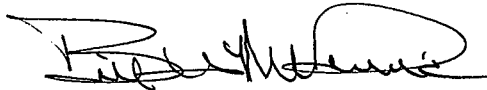
Providing a forum for 'spoon feeding' Union leadership information and decisions already made behind closed doors, without our presence, then asking us to cooperate after the fact, is neither acceptable, nor a recipe for peaceful labour relations.

This, I suspect, will be particularly true as the actual role out of your government's "vision" for health care on PEI, takes place.

Therefore (and unfortunately), we are left with no alternative but to advise that CUPE intends to maintain the integrity of our dispute resolution privileges under our collective agreement and the laws of Prince Edward Island to protect our members against any potential violations of their rights, that are heretofore unknown to us, for all the above-mentioned reasons.

Frankly, to do anything else would, in our view and under the circumstances, be irresponsible.

Sincerely,



Bill A. McKinnon
National Representative

c.c. Premier Robert Ghiz
Presidents of CUPE Locals 805, 1051, 1778 & 1779
Shelley Ward – President UPSE PEI
Paul Beauregard – IUOE
Tammy Chaisson – President IUOE
Barbara Brookins – President PEINU
Bob Hickee, Maritimes Regional Director
Olive Crane – Leader of the Official Opposition

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