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February 27, 2023

Report of 2022 Formal Complaints Provincial Workload/Occupational Health and Safety Committee

The CUPE Local 5430 Provincial Workload/Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Committee is accountable to the general membership, the executive board, and the table officers of CUPE Local 5430.

The committee shall create awareness of workload/OHS issues amongst the members through working with the membership in the regions and the Local 5430 executive to raise awareness of the language in the CUPE/SAHO collective agreement around workload and OHS. The goal is to work towards eliminating injury, illness, and disease caused by workload and unsafe workplaces.

The five (5) CUPE Local 5430 Provincial Workload/Occupational Health and Safety Committee individuals shall be known as CUPE Local 5430 Provincial Workload/Occupational Health and Safety Officers.

The provincial officers are as follows:

- Region 1: Sid Hall;
- Region 2: Alyson Hovdebo;
- Region 3: Lucy Poelen-Coninx;
- Region 4: Brenda Shauf; and
- Region 5: Cindy Witherspoon.

The provincial officers dealt with 1,289 workload/OHS complaints in 2022. The number of complaints is exhausting for these five provincial officers. Local 5430 has dealt with 3.53 formal complaint per day. There are several complaints that do not come forward.

Region 1

From January to December 2022, there was a total of 98 workload/OHS reports.

The majority of the complaints were short staffing. The inquiries suggest that staff are not picking up their phones or are refusing overtime, plus there are staff shortages. This is happening throughout our region. Postings have been put up, but not many are applying for casual, part-time, or temporary positions to fill the gap, especially in the rural areas. COVID-19 is still an issue. Even though most members have had their booster shots, the procedures are constantly changing on how long an employee needs to quarantine before returning to work.

Region 2

From January to December 2022, there was a total of 252 workload/OHS complaints.

References indicated staff burnout and staff having increased overtime. Staff are trying to assist by helping other units. Staff are working short, and no qualified individuals are applying.

Day
to
Day

All our facilities in Region 2 report working short on a regular basis. Overtime is reported every day in most departments when they have the staff to fill. Many staff are still not filling online workload forms out, and we continue to receive faxes in our office. Managers in many facilities have work short shift plans, but this does not address the staff shortage. Managers state they are trying to hire but do not receive qualified applicants.

Region 3

From January to December 2022, there was a total of 581 workload/OHS complaints. Twenty-one of these were strictly OHS complaints.

Concerns were related to managers not posting as well as the issue of no call outs being made to fill vacant shifts, with most of the concern being that nobody was available or willing to accept a shift.

An admission freeze was implemented at the same time as an implementation of a decreased baseline staffing, but facilities still operated with half of the decreased baseline. The use of contract continuing care assistants was implemented in Wolseley. Overtime was overused, and members were exhausted. Working short every day is exhausting. Mandating overtime has become a concern as it comes at a cost of members' health and safety. Managers who manage on call have been a real concern. Trails have become extending six-hour CCA shifts to hours; another trail is 12-hour shifts.

Region 4

From January to December 2022, a total of 194 workload/OHS reports were submitted.

It is still challenging to get members to fill out the forms. With the help of our facility representatives, we are encouraging members to add extra information, including the repercussions of working short, how it affected the residents, missed breaks, and what duties didn't get done.

Region 5

From January to December 2022, a total of 164 workload/OHS reports were submitted.

Employees returned to their positions now that the testing clinics have closed. Vacations are a huge concern. Short staffing occurred even before COVID-19 started. We are still experiencing staff shortages. The employer requested extensions on approving vacations. Many of our members have been denied their vacations for 2022. Short staffing continues to be the main reason for the workload issues and vacations being denied.