

Revera Our Parents Home: Bargaining survey results summary

What We Learned

The survey results paint a picture of a chaotic workplace where short-staffing and heavy workloads are leading to health and safety concerns for staff and inadequate care for residents. These problems, combined with low pay, are leaving employees feeling demoralized.

Some members told us in their own words what this feels like:

- *Everyone you see is always extremely stressed and overworked. No one is really happy and it makes for a very depressing environment for everyone.*
- *I feel very sad and desperate that we've been working so hard we all [lose] heart.*
- *This company is damaging my mental health.*

And the numbers tell the story overall:

- 68% of respondents said their top concern is that absent workers are not replaced
- 71% said staffing levels and workload are not appropriate
- 66% said that a stressful environment at work is damaging to mental/physical health
- And 69% have come to work sick because of concern for coworkers working short

These results confirm what members have been trying to communicate to management for a long time now, but Revera has pushed ahead with cutting staff in every department over the last two years. Despite having nearly full occupancy of residents, we have fewer staff now than we did when occupancy was much lower after COVID. Specifically, management has cut: the Dishwasher, a Server, two Cooks (including the Kosher Cook), four Health Care Aides, two Activity Aides, as well as drastically cutting back hours of Housekeeping and Maintenance.

Those who are left are less willing to pick up shifts because they are exhausted, even when overtime is offered. Many people have quit, and new hires often do not stay.

The response from management has been to spread the work of different departments on other employees, with Health Care Aides now responsible for plating and delivering meals, Reception dealing with maintenance issues, Cooks washing dishes etc. LPNs have also seen their duties expand to be close to those of RNs, but much of their time has to be spent trying to call staff to fill vacant shifts.

Under these conditions, it is not surprising that workplace injuries are occurring, and the general wellbeing of the staff is decreasing, with more people unable to attend work. Managers are also affected and three of them have been on longer term leaves.

And, of course, residents and families are affected too, and the staff are seeing that:

- *Residents themselves are asking where that money [they] are paying is going since they got a rent increase and all they have been seeing since is hours being cut in each department and less service.*
- *Residents are taking their anger on us as if we can do something about the situation.*

In some cases, staff are seeing that residents require a higher level of care than can be provided at OPH, with serious consequences for their health and safety:

- *Some of the residents [. . .] are candidates for long term care already and keep on coming back still after being discharged from the hospital.*
- *The amount of workload increased as patients [. . . are] needing more help from healthcare. They are more dependent [on] our care as usual and incidents happen on an everyday basis.*
- *Residents that should be in a higher level of care. No security during nights. One time [. . .] a Resident that got confused [. . .] went out of the suite and out of the building (wintertime).*

Members also told us that management is not addressing these widespread problems, with 60% reporting that the workload expectations are not reasonable and 52% saying that management direction is not clear.

These members summarized the problem well:

- *Employees are the ones who make this place work, and we all complain to one another for energy release yet try and keep a positive attitude towards residents and their family. Employers and management are using us and taking advantage of our kindness and care because we cannot just leave the residents unattended even if it is out of our job scope because we have human decency.*
- *The management expect too much for too little. The changes are affecting our well-being.*

What We Want

In addition to urgent solutions to the staffing, workload and health and safety crises, members want to be compensated fairly and paid accurately.

Here's what the numbers told us:

- 99% of members want our wages to rise in proportion to the rising cost of living
- Already 64% are saying that they do not make enough to keep up with costs
- 69% said that our wages do not reflect the value of our work and workload
- And payroll errors continue to affect the majority, with 56% saying they are dissatisfied with the accuracy of payroll

Many respondents also spoke about the unfairness of shift premiums being different for nursing care versus other departments and the weekend rate not being high enough.

And in terms of benefits, those who have them want the coverage improved, and those who don't (part-timers) want to be enrolled.

Here's what members said in their own words:

- *Keeping employees happy depends on paying them fairly. When they feel they're paid fairly, they're happier and more motivated. But if they think they're not paid fairly, they get unhappy, which can lead to more quitting.*
- *Our regular pay is [. . .] lower than other care facilities. [. . . Our rates are] very low as a ceiling wage given the workload and demand of our job.*
- *Everyone is overworked, feels underpaid and under-appreciated*

Pushing Back

Despite all the problems we are facing, our survey revealed that members are willing to take action to inform and empower themselves and each other.

More than 60% are willing to take action at work, such as:

- 67% would wear a union button at work
- 60% want to learn more about our collective agreement and 66% are ready to attend meetings
- And the majority would vote in favour of strike action (stay tuned for more information to come explaining in detail what this would look like!)

We are especially grateful that twelve members from all different departments stepped up to be worksite contacts to help the negotiating team communicate with everyone effectively so we can make sure everyone is fully informed and consulted.

This is a great start! With the support of everyone, we can build our strength together to demand the changes at work that we require and make OPH a better place to work.

Next Steps

Your negotiating team will be meeting again soon to take what you told us in the bargaining survey and turn it into our ongoing proposals for bargaining. Then we will exchange proposals with Revera, and we will keep you posted on the details of those meetings.

We are also planning to help educate our members on topics such as:

- Understanding your pay slip and ensuring that you are paid correctly
- How to approach your employer with concerns
- Understanding our rights and interpreting our collective agreement
- The process of filing a grievance

If you would like to suggest other topics or would like to get involved in helping to educate, organize and mobilize our workplace, please let us know

If you have any questions, concerns or would like more information, please get in touch with your negotiating team!

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