

## **“TIME TO GET SERIOUS ABOUT CCAC STAFFING”, CUPE TELLS CHAMPLAIN BOARD MEMBERS**

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CUPE 503, the union local representing Team Assistants and administrative staff at the Champlain Community Care Access Centre (CCAC), has a simple message for Champlain CCAC Board Members and provincial government officials. And it's this. "If you want the local CCAC to be able to continue its important work of linking up area residents with the in-home and long-term care services they require, you're going to have to make sure the place has enough people working there to keep up with the growing demand for services."

The current crisis at the Champlain CCAC results from a recent spike in new clients – with up to 6,000 new clients being added in the spring and mid-summer alone – teamed with the introduction of a new patient record system (called "CHRIS"), which has added significantly to the workload of employees. Taken together, these two events have pushed staff to the breaking point and threaten to bring the work of the Centre to a grinding halt.

Speaking of the deteriorating working conditions at Champlain, CUPE 503 President, Brian Madden, stated, "This is not a new situation since working conditions have always been pretty bad going all the way back to the introduction of CCACs in the province back in the 1990s. But in light of recent events, it's clear that things are quickly spiraling out of control with Champlain workers being pushed to the limit – and beyond. If nothing is done to improve staffing levels at Champlain and make sure existing employees have the resources they need to do their jobs, the result could be disastrous - not only for the people working there but also for the communities they serve."

The Champlain CCAC, which receives its funding from the Champlain Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and ultimately from the Ontario Government, has for some time now been struggling to meet ever increasing demands for its services without adding to the number of people employed by the Centre. And repeated requests for more staff are invariably rejected out of hand by management, which claims there is no money in the budget to hire new people. While CCAC employees have worked hard to compensate for this shortfall in staffing, cracks are beginning to appear in the system as shown in a series of articles that appeared recently in the media dealing with problems facing home care in our region.

Addressing the source of these problems and the need for immediate action in improving CCAC staffing levels, CUPE 503 President Madden placed the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the Board and provincial government. "It's time for the Board to show strong leadership by lobbying hard to make sure the Champlain CCAC receives the

funding it needs from the local LHIN so it can have the staff in place needed to continue providing these important services to our citizens. And it's time for the provincial government to stop talking about its commitment to in-home and long-term care and start doing something serious about it by coming up with the money needed to make sure the Champlain CCAC can continue to serve our community as well in the future as it has to date."