



Labour Relations Update April 2009

The following is intended as an information source to members of OASIS with respect to the activities of the LR Committee in relation to the upcoming WSIB Information Session, provincial restructuring plans effecting OSACH and all other Safety Associations, the OASIS salary survey, provincial bargaining trends and information concerning the Shared Interest Group.

Committee Membership

Since our last Update, the Committee has undergone changes in its membership. In the fall, Marion Peck, Executive Director of Madawaska Valley Association for Community Living joined the Committee. More recently in March, Eugene Versteeg, Director of Human Resources for Christian Horizons joined the Committee.

However, also in the fall, Don Seymour (one of the original members of the Committee) resigned. And in May, Andy Rotsma will also be resigning from the Committee. The Committee and the Board of OASIS are grateful to both Don and Andy for all of their effort and contributions to the work of the LR Committee over their years of involvement. Thank you to each of them.

WSIB Information Session

If you haven't already registered for the upcoming Information Session on April 23rd in Toronto, you can follow the link on the OASIS website for registration information. The presentations will represent the most up to date information relating to WSIB and alternative options for the Developmental Services sector. The session will be relevant to Executive Directors, Board members, Senior Managers and Union representatives. As noted, it will focus on changes to WSIB rates and coverage, and alternative coverage options. A panel consisting of ED's whose organizations have opted out of WSIB will also speak to their actual experiences. Be sure to join us in Toronto April 23, 2009 at the Doubletree by Hilton. There

will also be a networking event the evening of April 22nd hosted by Wentworth Financial Services for anyone registered to attend the Session.

Ontario Safety Association for Community and Healthcare (OSACH)

Ontario's Prevention System Realignment

Ontario's Prevention System is changing in 2009. The end goal is a coordinated and aligned new system that responds in a flexible, active way to emerging problems and with client centered services to achieve a sustainable, annual seven percent injury reduction in workplace injuries.

There are four service streams in the new system. OSACH will be part of the Government Directed Services Entity, along with the Municipal Health and Safety Association of Ontario and the Education Safety Association of Ontario. The Chairs of the three current associations will be meeting and forming a transition panel to oversee the change and coordinate planning for a national search for a CEO to lead this new amalgamated organization and support the new board. We anticipate that the new CEO will be confirmed around July.

The WSIB prevention division business plan for system realignment was approved by the WSIB Board of Directors in February. To review the complete business plan, follow the following link through the OSACH website: <http://www.hchsa.on.ca/new/whatsnew.shtml>

Ministry of Labour Safety Blitz

Ontario is continuing its efforts to reduce workplace injuries by focusing on hazards involving musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) during a workplace safety blitz in April.

The blitz will target workplaces in the construction, healthcare, industrial and mining sectors. Inspectors will concentrate on tasks that require workers to exert force in lifting, pushing or carrying items and tasks that put workers in awkward postures or are repetitive.

This initiative is part of the province's new *Safe At Work Ontario blitz strategy*, launched in June 2008. Keeping workers safe means increased productivity for Ontario's economy and less strain on the health care system.

QUOTES

"Musculoskeletal disorders account for almost half of all injuries in which workers need to take time off work in Ontario—resulting in substantial costs to the medical and workers' compensation system. Ontario and its workplace partners are committed to eliminating all workplace injuries, including those involving MSDs."

– Peter Fonseca, Minister of Labour

QUICK FACTS

- The Ministry of Labour compliance program that ran from April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2008 reduced the workplace injury rate by 20 per cent, and prevented more than 50,000 incidents.
- MSDs are injuries and disorders of the muscles, tendons and nerves that can develop as a result of continued exposure to repetitive work, awkward postures and other factors.
- In 2007, 43 per cent of all lost-time injuries involved MSDs. This amounted to more than 35,000 injured workers.

- Due to a drop in the annual rate of lost-time injuries, employers have avoided about \$5 billion in direct and indirect costs during the four years ending March 31, 2008. Reduced injuries also result in less strain on the healthcare system, and fewer workers off the job means increased productivity for Ontario's economy.
- Ontario employs 430 full-time occupational health and safety inspectors.

OASIS Salary Survey

Thank you to all of the OASIS Members, and non-members, who completed this year's salary survey and submitted it for compilation. The report is being prepared and will soon be available to participants.

Provincial Bargaining

Many agencies are entering into, or are already involved in collective bargaining this year. We understand that there are 58 CUPE Locals bargaining, and a few SEIU and OPSEU Locals. We also understand that so far there have been four successful agreements reached, while one strike deadline has been issued. There remain many concerns about the issue of picketing near the homes of the individuals being supported by agencies while involved in a strike. The Human Rights complaint that was filed is scheduled to undergo a mediation process at the end of April. Other activities will be updated and communicated on at a future date.

Human Resources Initiative – Shared Interest Group

As noted by Steve Finlay in his role as Co-Chair of the provincial Human Resources Initiative, a new sub-committee was recently established. This new group is entitled the Shared Interest Group. Its members consist of representatives of both unionized and non-unionized employers from across the province, along with representatives of CUPE, OPSEU & SEIU. The initial meeting was held at the end of February, with several more meetings scheduled before the summer break. Nancy Wallace-Gero chairs this group. Look forward to more detailed updates from her in the future, including more details regarding the Terms of Reference for the group.

Thanks

The LR committee would like to take this opportunity to thank the OASIS Members who supported us this past year by attending the Information Sessions we held, and through the use of the OASIS website and listserv. The feedback suggests that you found the information and networking a valued resource and we intend to continue bringing you the kind of information that will assist you in providing quality leadership in the sector.