

August 17, 2022

SENT VIA EMAIL premier@ontario.ca

**The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario**

Dear Premier Ford,

I would like to congratulate you on your recent re-election as Premier of Ontario. I write to you today to raise our grave concerns as we watch our health care system literally crumble around us.

Unifor represents over 30,000 members in the health and social services sector, working in hospitals, long-term care homes, retirement homes, assisted living, community care and emergency services. Quite simply, these workers are not ok. They have worked through a humanitarian crisis, and yet there is still little relief in sight for them. They watch their co-workers leave the industry altogether, or take jobs with agencies that double their salary and allow them the work flexibility they need.

As a multi-sector union, Unifor can proudly speak to the incredible collective agreements we have negotiated in the private sector. Workers are struggling with inflation and have determined their value at the bargaining table.

Unfortunately, this has not translated in any meaningful way for health care workers. Most are still constrained by Bill 124 and the antiquated arbitration system that takes away their right to legally strike has failed them. A recent arbitration award for eleven LTC homes awarded a meager 1.5% and 1.75%. While Unifor has taken this award to judicial review, we are far from any immediate relief.

While the Personal Support Worker (PSW) adjustment was a meaningful step in the right direction, it leaves too many workers behind. The nurse retention bonus is too little too late. The differential between what a PSW and a Registered Practical Nurse earns is now negligible. Outside of temporary pandemic pay in 2020, the remainder of the health care work force has received no enhancements or bonuses.

Our health care system is more than nurses and PSW's and shortages of staff are seen across the spectrum from cleaners to paramedics to technologists to cooks. Hospitals and other employers are resorting to desperate measures including excessive overtime and expensive agency use. This crisis is not about money. Privatization always costs more, delivers less, and is not a viable solution.

There are real solutions to these problems. No meaningful effort has been made to create full-time work and many still work multiple jobs. Wages and benefits must be competitive. Health care workers must feel respected.

Unifor would like to request a meeting to discuss the necessary solutions. I look forward to hearing from you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lana Payne', with a large, stylized initial 'L'.

LANA PAYNE
National President

LP/bmkcope343

cc The Honourable Sylvia Jones
Naureen Rizvi
Katha Fortier
Andy Savela