

UFCW CANADA Locals 175 & 633

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Study Says More Private For-Profit Hospitals Increase Death Risk

Two months ago a prestigious and reputable publication, the **Canadian Medical Association Journal**, published a major study linking private for-profit hospitals to higher death rates.

The study, which involved more than 26,000 hospitals and 38-million patients, was conducted and reviewed by experts from McMaster University, the University of Buffalo, the Veterans Affairs Medical Centre in Buffalo, the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research in Toronto, and the University of Toronto. Its results concluded that private for-profit hospitals were associated with an increased risk of death.

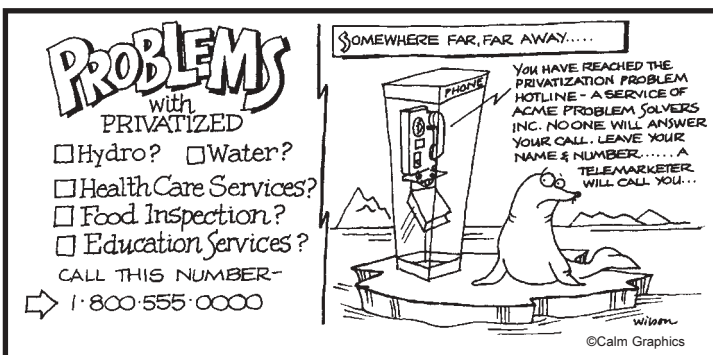
The study raised the question as to why there is an increase in mortality in for-profit institutions, then notes that investors are typically looking for 10%-15% return on their investments and that

hospital administrators in private for-profit hospitals usually receive generous rewards for achieving or exceeding expected profit margins. As well private for-profit hospitals must find additional money to pay taxes on profits.

But where do these profits come from? The **Canadian Health Coalition** says for-profit care providers must divert resources from patient care to deliver the profits to shareholders. One way to reduce costs and increase profits is to reduce the number of skilled professionals working in the hospital. But having fewer skilled professionals translates into increased hospital mortality rates. The research study supports this line of reasoning.

Currently 95% of Canadian hospitals are private not-for-profit facilities. They are often owned by religious organizations, communities, regional health authorities or hospital boards. Let's be vigilant to ensure these hospitals remain not-for-profit. None of us would want – or should have – to lose a loved one, needlessly, because someone wants to make profits from health care. Nor should health care workers be asked to do the impossible – to minimize suffering and deaths – when there just aren't enough staff to give sick people the time and attention which they require.

News and Views



The Canadian Health Coalition says if Canada switched to for-profit hospitals more than 2,000 additional Canadians would die every year. Its spokesperson **Shirley Douglas**, daughter of Canada's 'Father of

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Medicare' **Tommy Douglas**, says, "for-profit hospitals would result in the avoidable deaths of thousands of Canadians a year."

More information on health care issues is available by contacting the Canadian Health Coalition 613.521.3400 Ext.308 or visiting its web site at www.healthcoalition.ca or www.medicare.ca.

More Health Care Workers Organized

On May 20, 2002 workers at the **Central Toronto Community Health Centres** voted in favour of joining Local 175. The 33 workers, at the two Toronto locations on Jarvis and Bathurst streets, work in administration and counselling as well as in various health and medical support positions.

Another 31 workers, employed at the **Anne Johnson Health Station** on Yonge Street, voted to join Local 175 on June 25. Local 175 Organizing Coordinator **Mark Flannigan** says, "These workers joined the union because they really like their jobs; they want a collective agreement with good union security and seniority clauses that will ensure them a solid future and good career prospects with their employers."

OLRB Confirms UFCW Representation at Brampton Coke Plant

Workers at the **Coca-Cola bottling plant in Brampton** can completely enjoy the benefits and security of their union contract after the **Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB)** upheld Local 175's right to represent them in a ruling on June 26, 2002.

Workers from Coke plants in Guelph, Hamilton, Downsview and Thorncliff were moved to the new bottling plant over several months, starting in April 2001. A majority of these workers had collective agreements with UFCW Canada.

Unfortunately another union, who had formerly represented a minority of these workers, decided it would challenge Local 175's right to represent the workers. If the OLRB had accepted the other union's arguments it would have meant that a very strong collective agreement would be set aside and the workers would be without any agreement until such time as a new one could be negotiated. Without an agreement workers would lose protections and the ability to grieve unfair or unsafe working conditions and they would lose all guarantees respecting wages, hours and benefits.

"It would *not* have been at all in the best interests of these workers to set this agreement aside – especially given the adjustment challenges of combining four dif-

ferent working groups into one new plant," says Local 175 President **Wayne Hanley**. "Local 175 has committed substantial resources to ensure the employer completely adheres to the collective agreement and works with the Union Stewards and Staff Representatives to provide the best possible working environment. Now that the OLRB has confirmed Local 175's legal right to represent workers at this plant we can continue doing all the work that needs to be done."

Ottawa & Stratford Coke Plants Ratify New Contracts

Local 175 members at **Coca-Cola Bottling in Ottawa** ratified a new agreement on January 20, 2002.

The 90 workers gained wage increases of 12% over the life of the agreement. Substantial improvements were negotiated in the **Canadian Commercial Workers Industrial Pension Plan (CCWIPP)** which will ensure the employer, through contributions of almost \$12,000 per month, completely covers the past service requirements. The employer will also increase its contributions by 23¢, bringing the total hourly contribution to 96¢.

The sick leave credit increases by 25% on the existing coverage. There are improvements in language including agreement that 12-hour shifts remain voluntary and will only apply if there is expansion due to new business.

"The Union Negotiating Committee did a great job," says Eastern Region Director **Dan Lacroix**. "The additional employer contributions to the pension plan are significant and will ensure a better standard of living for retiring members."

Negotiating the agreement: **Jean Bisson, Bob Chivers, Paul Dompierre, Doug Kowal** and Union Rep **Luc Lacelle**.

Coke workers at the plant in **Stratford** ratified a new agreement on February 25, 2002, a few days prior to the March expiry date of their earlier contract. "This is a very good new agreement which was ratified by a strong majority of the membership," says Union Rep **Wendy Absolom**. "It has increases in wages and benefits as well as language improvements that protect workers in a number of other areas."

Wages increase 2.5% in each year of the agreement, with an additional 46¢ across-the-board hourly increase on the date of ratification. The amount of life insurance coverage expands to \$40,000. Service technicians, who are supplied with tools, will see their annual allowance increased to \$240 to replace broken or lost tools. The annual footwear allowance rises to \$135. Layoff and

recall rights will lengthen from 18 to 24 months. The employer will also make annual hourly increases to the Canadian Commercial Workers Industrial Pension Plan (CCWIPP) bringing the total contribution in the last year of the contract to 71¢ per hour. A new letter of agreement has been added allowing the company to provide a quarterly incentive program for Full Service Vending Route Drivers, based on the number of cases of product sold per hour.

Workers will now have the right to review their personnel records. A new clause will require mandatory Steward representation at all meetings of a disciplinary nature. If the employer does not include a Steward at the meeting, the disciplinary issue becomes null and void. New language has been added to cover voluntary 12-hour shifts, allocation of overtime and an “off-peak” premium of \$1 per hour.

Union Negotiators: **Mike Jacobs, Jim Millar** and Union Rep **Wendy Absolom**.

Cargill Workers Donate \$1500 To Leukemia Research

Workers at **Cargill Foods in Rexdale** enjoyed the annual BBQ held on June 13, 2002.

Plant workers – who process sausages, patties, and steaks plus poultry, pork, and value-added specialty products – sampled salads, sausages and hamburgers which were donated by plant management. All money raised from the sale of food items and cooler bags was donated, on behalf of Locals 175 & 633, to the **Leukemia Research Fund of Canada (LRFC)**.

BBQ services were provided by both day and afternoon shift Stewards, assisted by Local 175 Union Reps **Anthony DiMaio and Rob Nicholas**.



Able chefs included from left: Tony Cercic, Randy Valdez, Robert Okyere, Appy Mufatau and Union Rep Anthony DiMaio.

Canada Safeway Members at Supermarkets in Fort Francis, Dryden and Kenora Ratify New Agreements

More than 400 supermarket workers at stores in Fort Francis, Dryden and Kenora ratified new agreements at membership meetings on June 9, 10 and 11. Although the three stores have separate collective agreements, they are negotiated together and then ratified by the membership at each of the stores.

The three agreements are similar to each other and also to the one imposed by an independent arbitrator for the Canada Safeway stores in Manitoba. “We’re happy and relieved that Safeway at last agreed to provide a fair settlement for these workers,” says UFCW Northern Region Director **Sharon Gall**, “but condemn the company’s refusal to offer Thunder Bay workers a similar contract.” Initially Safeway was insisting on a long list of concessions, similar to those demanded for the Thunder Bay stores, Gall says, but it subsequently withdrew all of these and agreed to what the negotiating committee felt was a fair offer.

Gall says the two-year agreement provides current workers with a wage increase in the form of a lump sum bonus, paid in two installments. There are also wage increases under the automatic progression schedule which provide fixed hourly rates depending on the type of work and the number of hours worked. The contract details eligibility and amounts of buyout pay as well as bumping rights and other options open to workers as a result of Safeway’s workplace restructuring program. There are new clauses relating to scheduling guarantees and maternity leave.

“This is a fair contract under the circumstances,” says Gall. “If Safeway had offered this same agreement to workers in Thunder Bay the union negotiating committee would have recommended that the members accept it.” Instead Safeway elected to announce the closure of the three Thunder Bay stores on June 6 after a majority of Thunder Bay workers voted not to accept the concessionary contract proposal which they were offered.

Free Training & Education Courses Offered

Call the Training Centre to obtain dates, availabilities and application forms for fall courses which are offered, without charge, to UFCW Locals 175 & 633 members.

New Collective Agreements for Ottawa-Area YIGs

Members at **Racine's Your Independent Grocer (YIG) in Casselman**, approximately 30 kilometres east of Ottawa, ratified a first collective agreement on December 16, 2002. A new wage scale increases the full-time top rate by 30¢ in each of the first and second years and 35¢ in the third year. For part-timers the existing wage scale top rate will increase by 90¢ in the same period.

The employer will pay all premiums for the Group Insurance and Dental Plans. The matching contribution to workers' RRSPs will increase each year. All workers will benefit from good language clauses. The number of full-time jobs are guaranteed for the term of the agreement. Part-time hours will be scheduled by availability and seniority. Sunday work is voluntary for all workers with hours in addition to the scheduled work week.

"This first collective agreement, which was ratified unanimously by the membership, will form an excellent base for future negotiations," says Chief Negotiator **Luc Lacelle**. **Robin Gauthier** assisted with negotiations.

Good new contracts were also negotiated for members at **Grenon's YIG in Rockland**, about 20 kilometres north-east of Ottawa, and **Arnprior YIG** on December 16, 2001 and March 13, 2002 respectively. Union Rep **Luc Lacelle** negotiated both contracts. He was assisted by **Pauline Charbonneau** on the Grenon's contract and by **Mike Cobus, Jason Stewart, Ken Turcotte**, and Union Rep **Simon Baker** on the Arnprior agreement.

Cornwall Furniture Factory Ratifies

On April 9, 2002, workers at **Ridgewood Industries** in Cornwall ratified a new agreement.

The 400 workers at the plant – which manufactures prefabricated furniture such as bookcases, TV stands and computer desks – will receive increases of \$1.60

per hour over the three-year life of the agreement. The company will also make increased payments to the pension plan and benefit plan, which will provide substantial improvements in the benefit package.

Improvements in the overtime and temporary lay-off clauses, as well as in job promotion language, will recognize seniority. Cross training will increase to allow senior members to better exercise their seniority on lay-offs. Vacation allocation language has also been improved and members with twenty years of service will receive five weeks vacation. The company's posted harassment and no violence policy will be recognized as forming part of the collective agreement.

"Worker and company interests were well served by this agreement," says Union Rep **Reg Baughan**. "Because of it the company has already proceeded with expansion plans, hiring another 200 people and adding a third shift in the plant, which is good for both current employees and the community."

Union Negotiators: **Yvon Sabourin, Rejean Vivarais, Warren Waugh**, Chief Steward **Carmen Mayer** and Union Rep **Reg Baughan**.

Labour Day 2002 is on September 2

To find out about events planned in your community contact your nearest Locals 175 & 633 office or your district labour council.



For the Toronto parade participating Members will receive a free jacket – while supplies last – if they register by August 23, by calling Heather or Laura at the Mississauga Union office and providing their jacket size. They can also register spouses and kids for free T-shirts, while supplies last.

Are You Moving? If you are moving or planning to move, please let us know so we can continue to send you Local 175 & 633 publications. Please mail your new address to us at the address below or call us at 905.821.8329 or 1.800.565.8329.

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