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HEALTHCARE UNIONS: DOUG FORD'S AD HOC GESTURES WON'T FIX THE WORSENING HEALTH HUMAN RESOURCE CRISIS

Unions representing 220,000 workers demand the repeal of Bill 124 and a real plan to fix the worsening health human resource crisis in Ontario

TORONTO, ON – Today, SEIU Healthcare, OCHU/CUPE, Unifor, and Ontario Nurses' Association, unions representing 220,000 healthcare workers across Ontario, including 85,000 nurses, issued an open letter to Premier Ford to fix the worsening health human resource crisis in Ontario and move past the band aid pay-as-you-vote gimmicks.

Temporary fixes haven't worked to stabilize the PSW workforce, and a one-time \$5,000 payment won't work to retain and recruit nurses who are asking long-term predictability and support.

Last month, healthcare unions wrote to Premier Ford regarding the staff shortages across many healthcare occupations and professions. Our unions have consistently urged the Premier to ensure that any retention bonus is inclusive of all front-line nurses and healthcare workers. Unfortunately, he chose to ignore the needs of the broader healthcare workforce who are feeling further demoralized because of this exclusionary retention bonus.

Ontario's healthcare unions once again called on Premier Ford to repeal Bill 124 and take urgent action to better respect, protect, and pay healthcare workers.

QUOTES:

"Healthcare workers don't need more of Premier Ford's bumper sticker election gimmicks, they need a plan that works to fix the real problems that undermine our public healthcare system, including the immediate repeal of Bill 124. This International Women's Day we repeat our demand that Premier Ford's Conservatives at Queen's Park repeal their anti-worker, anti-women wage restraint law and urgently address the health human resource crisis in Ontario." – Sharleen Stewart, SEIU Healthcare

"What health care workers want is to be able to bargain wages that reflect their contribution and the significant inflation they are facing. They would like to be able to bargain psychological

supports. None of this is possible because of Bill 124. Ad hoc gestures like one time retention bonuses don't raise the base rates and aren't pensionable. They don't apply to everyone and leave all of other health care workers feeling unvalued. It's time for the government to stop patronizing health care workers and let them bargain." – Michael Hurley, President, OCHU/CUPE

"Almost every health care worker in the province continues to work under emergency orders that supersede their rights under their collective agreement, with no end in sight. They can be subjected to schedule changes, cancelled vacation and reassignment at a moments notice. Bill 124 and temporary bonuses for some, do nothing for the morale of these dedicated workers who make up a significant part of the team that provides great health care every single day." – Katha Fortier, Assistant to the National President, Unifor

"Nurses across the province are angry at once again being thrown crumbs by this government, instead of meaningful solutions to the health staffing crisis. Premier Ford's exclusionary bonus doesn't begin to address the issues fuelling Ontario's health workforce crisis and hurting patient care. If the Premier is serious about bolstering our health workforce, he needs to repeal Bill 124 immediately – no more excuses." – Cathryn Hoy, President, Ontario Nurses' Association