

Chartwell Retirement Home's 'profits over people' mindset is dangerous during pandemic

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TORONTO —Unifor is calling on Chartwell Retirement Homes to immediately rescind the creation of a new job classification in their Long Term Care Homes that requires a minimum public school education to work in their facilities.

“This move is a new low even for Chartwell who has consistently devalued and taken advantage of workers,” Jerry Dias, Unifor National President. “In a time where we need to be respecting health care workers and treating them like the essential service they are, Chartwell’s approach is to ignore the intent and spirit of the directive from the Ontario government and instead use it as a free-for-all to further increase profits at a substantially reduced pay for its workers.”

The Ontario government introduced the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act giving hospitals, long-term care and retirement homes the ability to identify staffing priorities, and develop, modify and implement redeployment plans to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Once the order was implemented, the union was advised by Chartwell that the employer is creating a new classification of workers with minimum qualifications or credentials required for applicants who will be providing health care.

“Chartwell is taking advantage of the act and treating it as if the collective agreement is non-existent,” said Nancy McMurphy President of Unifor Local 302. “I understand and support the need to ensure adequate staffing levels during this pandemic, but hiring new employees who lack the essential skills needed to prevent the spread of infection is utterly irresponsible.” McMurphy said the focus must be on the health and well being of the residents and the union is recommending increasing the hours of all current casual and part-time employees.

Unifor is not aware of any recent staffing issues at Chartwell and will be raising the concerns related to unqualified hires with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Unifor is Canada's largest union in the private sector and represents 315,000 workers in every major area of the economy. The union advocates for all working people and their rights, fights for equality and social justice in Canada and abroad, and strives to create progressive change for a better future.

Information about the union’s response to the pandemic, as well as resources for members can be found at unifor.org/COVID19.

For media inquiries or to arrange an interview with Jerry Dias via Skype or FaceTime, please contact Hamid Osman, Unifor National Communications Representative at [647-448-2823](tel:647-448-2823) (cell) or hamid.osman@unifor.org