



Unifor celebrates personal support workers (PSWs) in Ontario, and Continuing Care Assistants (CCAs) in Nova Scotia on May 19, Personal Support Worker Day.

Across Canada these workers provide the highest quality patient-centred care every day in our communities, our homes, and in long-term care homes and hospitals.

“PSWs and CCAs are incredible caregivers who make sure our loved ones are healthy and safe,” said Jerry Dias, Unifor National President. “This pandemic has further exposed the unjust working conditions these workers face every day due to insufficient government investment and continuous cost cutting. These workers deserve better as they continue to serve our most vulnerable despite being overworked and undervalued by governments and employers.”

In the years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Unifor has raised the alarm on the crisis in long-term care where many PSWs and CCAs work. The pandemic has shed more light on the sector’s deteriorating working conditions. PSWs and CCAs have faced increasing workloads and have often work short-staffed due in part to the sector’s unfair practices and below inflation wage increases.

For many years, Unifor has specifically called on the Ontario government to address the issues facing PSWs. The union has long advocated for a regulatory minimum of four hours per patient as the standard of care in long-term care homes.

“The pandemic must serve as a wake-up call to Doug Ford that ignoring the risks PSWs face are extreme the crisis in long-term care can no longer be tolerated,” said Naureen Rizvi, Unifor Ontario Regional Director. “The health of Ontarians relies on the government immediately developing a holistic strategy that attracts more PSWs back to the industry, regulates minimum hours of care and increases wages beyond the pandemic pay premium. These workers have shown their value time and time again. Now Doug Ford must show them the respect that they deserve.”

In Nova Scotia, [Unifor joined with five other unions](#) to advocate for better protection for CCAs, including providing the proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to all health care workers.

“COVID-19 has revealed what Unifor has been saying for years about long-term care being under-funded and under-supported by government,” said Linda MacNeil, Unifor Atlantic Regional Director. “Despite the Nova Scotia government having commissioned an Expert Panel on Long-Term Care, to which [Unifor](#)

the lack of urgency by McNeil's government. Workers continue to be over-worked and underpaid, recruitment and retention issues persist."

Dias calls it an embarrassment that provincial governments have not acted on pleas from long-term care workers, their unions, employers and other advocacy groups.

Personal Support Workers and Continuing Care Assistants are vital members of the patient care team. Their hard work and professionalism is critical to and appreciated by residents and clients. The union will continue to call on governments and employers to provide adequate personal protective equipment, maintain sufficient staffing levels and give fair compensation for long-term care workers during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jerry Dias".

Jerry Dias
National President
