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| **MEDIA ADVISORY** | **June 27, 2018** |

**CUPE meets with Minister of Labour to establish common ground**

CUPE NS President Nan McFadgen along with senior CUPE staff met with Minister of Labour Mark Furey yesterday to highlight the work CUPE members are doing in the province and to establish neutral ground on which to work together on common interests.

Both sides agreed that better communications, resources and timing could help resolve issues, especially in health care where reorganization has resulted in a lot of change and stress for employees.

During the meeting McFadgen asked Minister Furey if his government would partner with the union on a recruitment and retention strategy for long term care and home care. McFadgen pointed out that staff shortages in this sector were resulting in a tremendous amount of overtime at a high cost to government as well as to workers’ health and patient care.

“Our members in long term care and home care are stressed, overworked and getting sick as a result,” said McFadgen. “Some work 12 to 18 hour days and have mandatory overtime. Many are not able to take their vacations. Home support workers often have several split shifts in one 12-hour period, yet only get paid for six or seven hours.”

McFadgen pointed out that financial incentives are needed to encourage people to take the training. “It costs $7-8000 to take the continuing care assistant (CCA) course. Many people who would like to work in this field, which is mostly women, simply can’t afford that.

“This is a rapidly growing sector and the need for recruitment and retention is urgent,” she added.

Louise Riley, chair of CUPE’s Long Term Care Co-ordinating Committee, was pleased to hear that the minister agreed to discuss CCA recruitment initiatives with other government departments.

“This would be a very important initiative for this government and I look forward to continuing discussions,” she said.

CUPE’s Home Support Co-ordinating Committee Chair Heather Croft was also pleased with the outcome of the meeting, saying: “This is a long time coming. We are cautiously optimistic about this potential collaboration.”

CUPE represents 19,000 public sector workers in Nova Scotia and has members at most of the province’s long term care facilities.

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