

WRHA HOME CARE / HOME SUPPORT UPDATE

MGEU Local 113

United Against Home Care Privatization - Celebrate April 16, Public Home Care Workers Day!

As you know, last summer, the WRHA announced that it was launching an "enhanced home care" initiative. They said it would provide short-term intensive assessments of patients transitioning out of hospital to determine if they could return to the community, or if they should go into a personal care home.

In September, the WRHA awarded private contracts to do this work for at least the next few years. "All Seniors Care," a Toronto-based corporation, was awarded the contract to establish 65 transitional beds in the community. "We Care" and "Paramed," also based in Toronto, were successful in their bids to secure the direct service work associated with this initiative.

We know this is your work and that you have been doing it for a long time! The MGEU is concerned that this initiative is simply the beginning of privatizing our universal, public home care program, which would:

- put profits before what's best for patients; and
- take money now devoted to patient care and give it to private investors.

When we got wind of the government's plans, we immediately demanded to meet with senior WRHA officials to try to stop them. We also went to the media to let the public know of our concerns and put pressure on the government. Please review the timeline – **MGEU Fighting Home Care Privatization: A Timeline** – on the other side of this update.

In spite of our efforts, the WRHA has proceeded with this initiative, which they now are calling "Priority Home."

We are continuing, however, to fight back! Our collective agreement contains a memorandum that limits the employer's ability to contract out more than 20% of home care attendant work in Winnipeg.



On April 16, 1998, MGEU members presented the government with 15,000 signed hearts that read, "My heart supports home care for people... not profit."

We filed a grievance with the WRHA because we believe they are now in breach of this commitment. They have denied the grievance. So, the Union has filed to have the matter heard by an arbitrator. In the meantime, we continue our efforts on your behalf...

Component Director, Marlene Hrechka, recently wrote a letter to the government, asking them to proclaim April 16, 2018 **Public Home Care Workers Day**.

April 16 is a significant date for home care workers, as twenty years ago on that day workers marched to the legislature to present the government with 15,000 signed hearts that read, "My heart supports home care for people... not profit." The event demonstrated just how strong the resolve was for MGEU members and Manitobans to keep home care public.

Unfortunately, it appears the government doesn't share our enthusiasm for recognizing your vital work and the importance of keeping it public. They rejected the request to proclaim Public Home Care Workers Day.

So, if they won't do it, we'll recognize it without them!

On April 16, please show your support on Facebook by sharing our union's posts and change your profile to the "My heart supports home care for people... not profit" image we'll post that same day.

Let's continue to show this government that we care just as much about keeping home care public in 2018, as we did in 1998!

In Solidarity,
Michelle Gawronsky
MGEU President

Save your dues & trees...

Get us your
email address
and we'll send
you electronic
updates from
now on.

contact us...

MGEU Resource Centre
204-982-6438
(toll-free 1-866-982-6438)
resourcecentre@mgeu.ca

connect with us...

www.mgeu.ca



MGEU Fighting Home Care Privatization: A Timeline

Fall 2016 President Gawronsky speaks out against the government's announcement to hire consulting firm KPMG (the same company behind the Filmon government's failed attempt to privatize home care in the 1990s) to make recommendations on changes to health care.

January 2017 Government releases another report – *The Future of Home Care Services in Manitoba* – which quietly recommends Manitoba look at "different funding models for home care services."



That same month, a government memo instructs employees to stop using the words "Manitoba" and "Program" when referring to home care. President Gawronsky brings the issue to the media, questioning the unnecessary name change.

March 2017 **H** Government cuts \$1.7 million in funding for the Hospital Home Teams program. In response, President Gawronsky says that cutting this frontline program for clients with chronic health issues will cause upheaval and hurt patients in the program.

April 2017 When government and WRHA reveal plans to establish an "enhanced home care service" as part of its hospital re-org plan, President Gawronsky tells media this is simply the first concrete step to privatizing home care.



President Gawronsky invites Milton Sussman and the Health Minister to meet with her and the Home Care Local 113 Executive to discuss the changes. Sussman and senior WRHA officials accept, but Minister of Health doesn't attend.

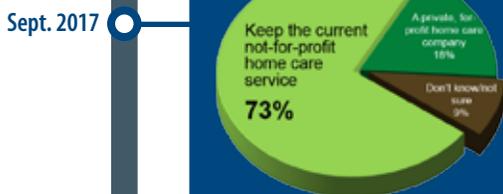
June 2017 Milton Sussman and senior WRHA officials meet with President Gawronsky and Home Care Local 113 Executive. Sussman claims that "enhanced home care" is a temporary initiative and this work will eventually be brought into the bargaining unit. President Gawronsky and the Local Executive insist that this is work they already do and they stand ready to do it!

The Union cautions the WRHA that the collective agreement contains a Memo of Understanding (MOU) II-19, that limits contracting out of home care services to a maximum of 20%.



August 2017 The WRHA says this work is new work and the MOU does not apply. They also insist that even with "enhanced home care" they are under the 20%.

MGEU releases Care Comes First - a large-scale advertising campaign, featuring a website, television ads, online ads, and billboards to promote the protection of public health care services like home care.



Pallister government announces a \$9.2-million, two to three-year deal with an Ontario-based company to create 65 private transitional care beds in Winnipeg. President Gawronsky criticizes the move in the media, saying the money would have been better spent on positions within our public home care system.

MGEU releases poll the same day, which shows that 73% of Manitobans believe home care should be delivered by the current not-for-profit public system.

Later that month, the government announces more contracts with companies (We Care and ParaMed) to deliver home care services to patients transitioning out of hospital. President Gawronsky holds another press conference, asking why they'd spend \$15.7 million on the two contracts, rather than spend a fraction of that to hire more home care workers.

The MGEU requests data from the WRHA to back up their claims about being under the 20%.



October 2017 Home Care Local 113 meeting is held. MGEU Director of Negotiations attends the meeting to provide an update on the enhanced home care initiative (which is now called "Priority Home"), and union activities to challenge it.

Nov. 2017 MGEU and WRHA meet to discuss WRHA data and the MOU.

Dec. 2017 MGEU files a grievance against the WRHA, stating that their "Priority Home" initiative breaches the MOU.

Feb. 2018 A grievance hearing is held and the grievance is denied by the WRHA. The MGEU files for arbitration. Home Care Local 113 meeting is held. President Gawronsky and Director of Negotiations attend to provide an update.

March 2018 MGEU asks the government to proclaim April 16, 2018 - Public Home Care Workers day! Government denies request.