

NEW BRUNSWICK  
Home Support Association



NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK  
Soutien A Domicile

PO Box 23060  
Fredericton, NB E3B 7B3

Email: [info@nbhsa.ca](mailto:info@nbhsa.ca)  
Website: [www.nbhsa.ca](http://www.nbhsa.ca)

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## E-Newsletter

### Letter from the President

Dear Agencies and Employees,

These are exciting times for the NBHSA member agencies and their employees. Home Support is finally moving onto the radar screen of the decision makers in government. With financial assistance from the Department of Post-Secondary Education Training and Labour the NBHSA has employed a consultant to assist them in implementing the recommendations outlined in the Home Support Worker Labour Force Adjustment Report. My hope is that once these recommendations are fully implemented we will be able to dramatically improve the Recruitment and Retention of Home Support staff. This will in turn improve our ability to provide services to New Brunswick's most vulnerable citizens, our seniors. It should also increase the compensation and benefits to our staff that have been underpaid and undervalued for far too long. We will be presenting our findings to the government in the Fall of 2008. In addition there is a Pay Equity Task Force who have been holding province wide consultations with government agencies, home support staff and agencies to review their scope of practice and compensation. Their report is due in 2009 and should further improve the lives of all home support staff. I would urge all Home Support staff to cooperate in any way you feel will assist the committee in their consultations. Your input is invaluable to help the committee reach their conclusions.

In closing I urge all of you to participate any way you can to help solve the challenges we in the Home Support industry are facing. Together we will find answers to these challenges and have a dramatic effect on all who provide and receive these valuable services.

Respectfully yours,

Bob Price

President – New Brunswick Home Support Association Inc.

# Pay Equity for Home Support Workers

The Province of New Brunswick is currently implementing a pay equity program for contracted home support workers working for provincially tendered Home Support Agencies.

“We’re doing job evaluations in all parts of government, and this includes job evaluations to extend pay equity to workers providing contracted services to government as part of the Wage Gap Action Plan and Charter for Change commitments,” said Anne Soles, Program Manager with the Women’s Issues Branch.

New Brunswick has more than 3,000 home support workers employed by 48 agencies contracted by government. The Department of Social Development currently pays \$13.61 per hour to agencies contracted by government for their home support services, plus transportation allowances.

In May 2008, a Joint Steering Committee was appointed to provide strategic focus to the job evaluation process. Following the evaluations, the Joint Steering Committee will make recommendations to government.

The committee has also approved the development of a Joint Job Evaluation Committee whose task will be to evaluate the job of a Home Support Worker. The committee had its first meeting in June 2008 and will continue to meet once a month to fulfill its task.

Work has begun on the Joint Job Evaluation System with respect to factors and sub-factors. In the next few months, a Job Analysis Questionnaire will be developed. Both committees are composed of equal representation by government, and workers and owners from all regions of the province.

The pay equity program began in the fall of 2007 with Child Care Staff, and continues now with Home Support Workers. Transition House Workers will follow. The process is expected to continue until 2009.

For up-to-date information on the pay equity program and for resources on issues of wage gap and pay equity, please visit <http://www.gnb.ca/0012/Womens-Issues/wg-es/payequityprog/homesupport-e.asp>.

# Testimonial from Home Care Worker

There are jobs, a lot of jobs out there and I have held a number of them. None have been as personally rewarding as the experience I get in the field of Home Health Care. Part of the enjoyment in working with seniors, is the fact that it is not routine. It is not like working on an impersonal production line.

Yes, there are rules and protocols we follow, but each client is unique in any number of ways. This makes visiting their home not just challenging but interesting. It is very much a one on one relationship at any given time. Our clients not only open their home to me, but in so many cases, they open a part of their life. They have seen so much, experienced times we only read about in history books. And as a representative of We Care, I bring a little of our world to them.

We see our clients at a time in their lives when they are most vulnerable. There is much satisfaction in helping make their days and nights as comfortable and enjoyable as possible.

Some times it is just listening to them, sometimes it is letting them know about services or benefits available to them, that they might not be aware of.

The hardest part of what I do is dealing with loss. We most often meet our clients late in their lives. It is always difficult to get a call saying a client has passed on. There is however comfort in feeling I helped make what time we had together, a little better for them.

There are very few jobs where you can say that.

Carol Dawn McLaughlin

## **“Home Support Workers – Raising our Voices”**

In January 2006, the Home Support Worker Labour Force Adjustment Committee (HSW-LFAC) issued a report entitled “Home Support Workers – Raising Our Voices: Toward Workforce Adjustment through Policy and Strategic Action”. This report was the work of a joint Committee having representation from the industry, Government, stakeholders and local representatives.

The report presented a number of recommendations which together are aimed at improving recruitment and retention in the Home Support industry. Because a number of factors are involved in these issues, the recommendations are comprehensive and multi-faceted. The recommendations address scope of work of Home Support Workers, training, recognition of training, working conditions including remuneration, benefits, scheduling, and workplace health and safety. Finally, the recommendations also include addressing regulatory and policy changes required of Government for full implementation of the recommendations.

The Project Coordinator is responsible to implement the recommendations of the January 2006 report “Home Support Workers – Raising Our Voices: Toward Workforce Adjustment Through Policy and Strategic Action”, including working with the NBHSA to bring about regulatory and policy changes required of Government.

Working with the Project Coordinator the NBHSA has; Established appropriate advisory groups and working groups, to provide advice and direction throughout the project. These advisory and working groups include: Scope Working Group, Education Advisory Group, Membership Working Group, and the Working Conditions and Compensation Working Group. If any member is interested in participating please contact Rick Hutchins at: (506) 363-4538 In addition, the Project Co ordinator has carried out research, consultation, analysis, and policy and program development as indicated in the work plan and is working toward implementing the recommendations of the HSW-LFAC report. .

As we move forward, the NBHSA will present outcomes of the project to appropriate Government departments and agencies, to achieve regulatory and policy change as required to implement the outcomes. For further information contact Rick Hutchins @ (506) 363-4538 or via e-mail: [hutchr@nbnet.nb.ca](mailto:hutchr@nbnet.nb.ca)

The updated report was presented at the AGM in October 2008 and released publicly at this time. This is a very important process being undertaken by the NBHSA and we encourage all agencies to get involved and participate for change.

### Interesting Research

#### **What is Compassion Fatigue?**

Studies confirm that caregivers often experience high levels of compassion fatigue. “Compassion fatigue symptoms are normal displays of chronic stress resulting from the care giving work we choose to do.” It has been suggested that people attracted to care giving enter the field already compassion fatigued. Some of us learn early on to care for others’ needs before taking care of ourselves.

In the case of Home Support, workers have close contact with their clients, often over long periods of time. Dealing with emotions related to clients’ illnesses, demanding or difficult family members or clients, and death can be overwhelming. In addition, the Home Support Worker is often isolated, not having co-workers to talk to about their feelings. There may also be financial or family stressors one has to deal with outside of work.

**“You don’t have to make a choice. It is possible to practice healthy, on-going self-care while successfully continuing to care for others.”**

#### Ways to Practice Self-Care

- Be kind to yourself.
- Accept who you are.
- Express your needs verbally.
- Practice health-building activities like exercise or meditation.
- Eat healthy foods.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Reserve your energy for worthy causes. In other words, choose your battles.
- Surround yourself with people who accept you for who you are.
- Sing, dance, and sit with silence.

If you would like to take the Compassion Fatigue Self-Test or get more information, please visit the following website:

<http://www.compassionfatigue.org>

Reference: *The Compassion Awareness Project* (Patricia Smith) [www.compassionfatigue.org](http://www.compassionfatigue.org)

The New Brunswick Home Support Association has three levels of membership: Full Member, Associate Member and Affiliate Member. If you would like to join the Association, please contact us via email at: [info@nbhsa.ca](mailto:info@nbhsa.ca) or call (506) 363-4538.

Reference: *The Compassion Awareness Project* (Patricia Smith) [www.compassionfatigue.org](http://www.compassionfatigue.org)