NBHSA President Responds to Home Care Workers September 23, 2011

ATT to Mr. Bob Price

I am speaking on behalf of many home care workers who are very upset to hear that the President of the NB homecare Association is telling Blaine Higgs and Sue Stultz to quote "Keep the money" I would like to add that you are not speaking on behalf of the homecare workers in our province! You may be speaking for the agencies but are not speaking for us, and therefore do not have the right to give back what is not yours!! We workers deserve this raise, you are not in the field, we are, and this wage increase will help keep workers, as the low wage currently paid, with no mileage is pathetic! I realize the agencies have costs, however the two agencies I am familiar with work from home, therefore lowering their overhead. Also, we workers are responsible for delivering our own payslips, therefore further lowering agency costs. I just want to let you know Mr. Price, you have no right!! You will lose workers without this raise, and with the raise you will improve the quality of workers you attract, as in a lot of cases is desperately needed. Sincerely, NB home care workers!

Response

I agree with you 100% that we have no right to speak on behalf of the employees.
Although this is true we have been working for 6 years to improve working conditions, compensation and benefits for employees. For the last two years we have had two working groups consisting of Social Development and NBHSA members. One group worked on an Education and Training program and one on Working Conditions, Compensation and Benefits. These groups came back with significant improvements for HSW in both areas and were unanimously approved by government and the NBHSA. The recommendations were forwarded to the Deputy Minister where they stalled.
The benefits included increases in travel, pay for your travel time, sick time pay, bereavement pay and shift differential pay for nights and weekends. We also wanted government to assist employees with their Education and Training.
Few employees know this because we did not want to get their hopes up. I will be happy to share this info with you and anyone else who wants a copy.
Many agencies have also told us that in order to pay for the increase they will have to cut health benefits, sick time or additional mileage payments. Experienced and long time employees will be paid the same as new employees. We don't think this is fair.
As agencies we have no problem with the increases to employees. We have been fighting for them longer than you know. Our problem is with the government bill rate. It is to low to allow agencies to pay the employees without the repercussions I outlined above.
In closing my feeling is if the employees and agencies work together we will accomplish much more than if we fight with each other. Our fight is with the government to treat us both fairly and give HSW the pay and benefits we agreed upon.
I am out of the office today but would be happy to discuss any issues with you at any time.

Best Regards,

Bob Price

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