

Preparations for Clerical Workers Awareness Day in full swing

Welcome to the third edition of PaperWork as we prepare to celebrate Clerical Workers Awareness Day on February 12, 2008.

Since early 2007, when the P.E. clerical subcommittee was first appointed, we've been working hard on your behalf to build a network of clerical activists within HEU.

The momentum for this project began in 2005 at the first-ever clerical workers occupational conference. At the two-day conference, about 100 delegates described an overwhelming sense of being underpaid, undervalued and overworked. Clerical workers – who take pride in their work and are valuable members of the health care team – spoke out about feeling invisible, being misunderstood in their roles, and having their critical work unrecognized.

“As a former clerical worker in Toronto's library system, I know how important our work is and how invisible it can be,” says HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy. “I encourage all HEU members to show support for the members of our clerical family on February 12 and recognize the contribution they make to your team.”

It's important to clarify that the HEU clerical subcommittee is not part of the bargaining committee. We don't have the authority or jurisdiction to negotiate wages, job descriptions or other collective agreement matters. That work continues being carried out by servicing reps and the clerical benchmark review committee, but we can collectively help raise the profile of clerical workers in B.C.'s health care system.

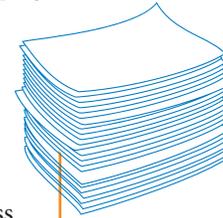
And that's what February 12 is all about.

We encourage HEU locals, sisters and brothers, clerical and non-clerical alike to acknowledge the contribution we make to health care through a series of initiatives: organizing appreciation events at your work site (which may include a BBQ or cake); distributing posters, wearing clerical worker buttons, hosting an information table outside your workplace cafeteria – whatever it takes, enjoy the day and have some fun!

In addition to the Clerical Workers Awareness Day celebrations, we're continuing our outreach work. The clerical subcommittee is planning to have a presence at HEU's two-day women's conference – the first in our union's history – being held in Burnaby on May 14 and 15.

We're also in the early planning stages of a clerical workers' workload campaign. Too much work, lack of replacement, missed breaks, unpaid overtime, poor equipment, insufficient training and work-related injuries all contribute to clerical workers' stress levels and sometimes lead to feelings of being demoralized. The subcommittee will provide information and tips on how clerical workers can use their collective agreement to assert their rights, and develop practical and creative tools to address unrealistic workloads in order to make the workplace healthier and happier.

If you're not on the HEU “Clerical Workers Action Network” (which boasts about 1,200 subscribers), please send us your email address at clericalworkers@heu.org to receive our monthly emails on clerical issues.



DID YOU KNOW
More than three of every 10 clerical workers report that they are seldom or never backfilled for vacation?

More than half of our clerical members report that they are seldom or never backfilled for sick time or medical appointments?

Four out of every 10 clerical workers report that they are seldom or never backfilled during leaves of absence?

Have fun February 12 – we deserve it!