

## **International Health Care Workers' Day**

The Canadian Union of Public Employees joins with other health care unions in North, Central and South America in declaring April 7, International Health Care Workers' Day.

Last November, at a health care workers' conference in Argentina, 12 unions endorsed April 7 as a day of commitment and action. The unions represented health care workers in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Canada, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela.

We agreed that all citizens, from the far north to the far south of the Americas, have a fundamental human right to health care, and that it is the duty of all governments to ensure that right is upheld.

Today we renew our pledge to fight for universal public health care and against free trade agreements such as the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) that promote the privatization of health care.

We demand that all governments ensure that public health care is provided to their citizens in accordance with the following:

- Health care shall be available to all citizens, and shall be provided irrespective of race, gender, region, economic condition, religion or language.
- Health services shall be sufficient to ensure maximum quality of life, and shall include all medical, hospital and physician services, drugs, mental health, care for the frail, elderly and disabled.
- All medical, social and ancillary services, such as the production of drugs, shall be made central to health, healing and recovery.
- All health services shall be integrated within a single system and such services shall be linked to social policies and programs designed to improve the social conditions that affect the health and well-being of citizens; these determinants include economic conditions, education, housing, environment, employment, working conditions, etc.
- Social security shall be fully integrated into the principles of public health care.
- Health care shall be available to citizens at no cost with no user fees or extra charges.
- Governments shall ensure that the health care system is sufficiently funded.
- Health services shall not be treated as market goods and shall be delivered by public sector workers in not-for-profit facilities and settings.
- Health services shall not be provided by for-profit corporations.

- All health care workers shall have the right to form unions and to bargain collective agreements freely and with dignity.

END