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For Immediate Release

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100% of Cumberland County Home Support Workers vote to strike

Cumberland County, Nova Scotia - Home support workers represented by CUPE 3953 from the Victorian Order of Nurses of Cumberland County voted in favour of a strike mandate, with 100% of those who voted authorizing a strike.

"We're proud to join the rest of the CUPE home support workers by voting in favour of the strike, but we're disappointed it's come to this," said CUPE 3953 President Kelly Forbes-Leblanc. "We've been fighting since 2023 for a fair deal, for acknowledgment of our pivotal place in the health care system, but government and our employer continue to ignore us."

Home support is a vital part of the health care system, allowing seniors to stay in their home longer before moving to long term care, and those in acute care to return home without fear that they will lose out on the care they need. The work of these Continuing Care Assistants (CCAs) eases the strain on both long term and acute care. They are fighting for fair wages, scheduling based on geography and improved sick time.

"Our home support workers, like so many across the province, service a large geographical area and that means we spend hours a day in our vehicles, travelling between clients," explained Forbes-LeBlanc. "We want scheduling to be based on geography, so we're not driving from one side of our service area to the other between clients."

CCAs are often given as little as 30 minutes between clients, during which time they are expected to submit their reports and travel to their next client. Since they service all of Cumberland County, that means CCAs are often travelling from Malagash to Amherst but could be scheduled to travel from Malagash to Advocate Harbour if scheduling isn't done with geography in mind.

"Home support, as a sector, is struggling. We're all short staffed, we're overworked, and the waitlist for home care is only growing," said Forbes-Leblanc. "This problem is only going to get worse if the government doesn't prioritize the workers in the sector. They can't keep ignoring us for two years, or in the case of our fellow CUPE home support, four years, and expect people to join the sector. Premier Houston said health care was a priority. Well, we're still waiting for that to mean us too."

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