



**OUR  
FUTURE  
TOGETHER**

**MENTAL HEALTH  
ISSUES DOMINATE DISCUSSION**

Delegates heard a presentation from Claudia Canales & Andrew Szeto about the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

“There is a common myth that those who ‘suck it up’ are strong,” said Szeto. “Those who share their story are the strong ones.”

Szeto said the Mental Health Commission, an arm’s length organization funded by the Federal Government, aims to reduce the stigma about mental health in Canada and open minds.

According to the commission, one in five Canadians have a mental illness each year. Almost 500,000 Canadians will not go to work because of mental illness, at a cost of \$51 billion per year to hospitals, insurance costs, lost wages, and other costs. Szeto calls that figure conservative, since it doesn’t include ‘presenteeism’ and many other costs associated with mental health.

There is help for many people with mental health problems, but the stigma remains a barrier. According to Szeto, between 50%-65% won’t seek help; but help seeking leads to better prognosis, increased productivity and a positive financial impact.

In addition, doing nothing adds costs to employers due to staff turnover, legal implications and injuries.



**COMING UP TODAY**

9:15 am - Gil McGowan

10:00 am - Sarah Hoffman

11:00 am - Elections



**EQUAL  
OPPORTUNITIES  
AWARD**

Ruth Shymka (CUPE 2550) is the winner of this year’s Equal Opportunities Award. “I don’t care about your race, the colour of your skin, or how much money you make. Everybody is important.”

**PER CAPITA INCREASING**

Delegates approved a constitutional resolution increasing per capita fees to CUPE Alberta Division. Effective January 1, 2017 - per capita fees will increase by two cents from \$1.18 per member per month to \$1.20, increasing to \$1.22 in 2018.

Per capita fees fund CUPE Alberta and all its operations.



## CUPE TREASURER OUTLINES PLAN TO MAKE THE UNION STRONGER



The challenges facing public sector workers and CUPE have never been greater, and CUPE National Secretary Treasurer Charles Fleury says the union has a battle plan ready to face those challenges.

Fleury told convention delegates that while revenues are tight, CUPE is allocating resources with an eye to giving locals the power to make gains at the bargaining table.

“CUPE is a very strong union,” said Fleury. “In CUPE we know how to mobilize our members and how to resist attacks.”

Fleury praised CUPE workplace stewards as key to a strong union. “Union Stewards talk with our members and back them up every day,” said Fleury. “We must support and mentor new stewards, we must send them to union education classes, we must tell them why we are fighting to raise every CUPE wage to at least nineteen dollars per hour. Why we fight to make sure that we have more full-time permanent jobs. Why we need pensions for every CUPE member.”

Fleury reminded delegates that changes made to the National Strike and Defense Funds will increase CUPE’s campaign power, allowing more funds for local, regional, and National campaign initiatives.

“Our priority is always to make sure that the picket lines stay strong and that we win the strike,” said Fleury. “We hope that this will help our members who are not working the traditional nine-to-five full-time job – mainly our precarious workers.”

Finally, Fleury said that with a large number of new staff, CUPE is investing in training.

“We have increased the funds for the mentoring and trainee rep program,” said Fleury. “This is especially important because now, fifty-four percent of our staff have less than five years on the job. This is a time of big staff changes.”

“Alone we can only do so much. But when we work together and support each other, we have the people power and the resources to win many fights.”



## CUPE SEEKS ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATION ON LAPP

Delegates approved a number of resolutions aimed at strengthening CUPE and labour influence over the governance of the Local Authorities Pension Plan (LAPP).

One resolution confirmed the long standing CUPE Alberta position that LAPP be governed as a ‘joint trusteeship’ – meaning equal numbers of board members from employees and employers. Currently the LAPP has a joint board of governors, but all decisions have to be approved by Alberta’s Minister of Finance.

Another resolution called for a permanent spot for CUPE on the LAPP Board of Governors. With roughly 20% of all LAPP members belonging to CUPE, delegates felt the union deserved permanent representation

## COMMITTEE CHANGES PASSED

A committee on committees? Yes, you read that right. CUPE Alberta launched an ad-hoc committee to consider the effectiveness of the current committee structure.

The committee recommended merging a number of committees, including:

- Literacy with Communications & Technology.
- Global Justice, Equal Opportunities, and Anti-Racism.
- Occupational Health & Safety and Environment.

The other committees would remain stand alone.

Convention voted to accept the changes.