

## **Greetings Rehabilitation Counselors and Happy New Year!**

I'm not sure if you noticed but our pay went down this month. Health Insurance premiums went up and Calpers is likely to raise the premiums on their Long Term Care programs. Calpers has also stopped the chiropractic benefit through Kaiser.

We have inquired as to how we can fight these cuts. In the meantime, contact Calpers directly to let them know that you're not accepting this. They need to consider the small amount they pay versus lost time due to pain and back pain, arm pain from over use syndrome, carpal tunnel and various other ailments caused by hours at the computer!

All kinds of folks, lobbyists, insurance companies like Calpers, career Unionists, lawyers, consultants, hotels and restaurants, party promoters, see Unions as cash cows that they can take advantage of without giving anything back. We as leaders and members don't expect to be paid for our organizing work nor are we entitled to perks or pluses paid for by our members' hard earned Union dues. It's the elephant in the room that our Union is paying for services with no tangible results, lots of pie in the sky, lots of false hope. The one important exception to this is that our Business Agents are working very hard day after day to defend our workplace problems. They are workers just like us and we need to encourage them and thank them for their efforts!

Our newly elected Union Executive Team ran on the premise that our members are sick and tired of the same old business as usual approach. Ideas like maybe if we're nice to the politicians, contribute to their campaigns, reason with them, that they'll do something for us. Ideas like we're better than those other Unions and we don't need to support their efforts. Well these myths and the people who tried to sell them to us are toast and they will fade away as we grow stronger and not tolerate any more fakes and phoney's dressed up in nice clothes and bullying us with their intellect. They lost because they failed to understand that we are not stupid and that the members' input and success matter more than anything else. Their failure to care about what the members think and want is the reason they lost and I'm not sure that they will ever understand that even though we tried to explain it in nice ways and sometimes through fighting with them. The leaders are nothing without the active participation of the members!

I encourage everyone to read up on Union history, to remember that Union members don't turn on other Union members even when they disagree. The Unions were created in the 30's and the 40's by determined workers who acted in systematic and disciplined ways and with strict loyalty to each other. Some of the people who fought to establish Unions were actually killed in the process. How can we forget the sacrifices of our predecessors and undermine the work of our Union sisters and brothers? How can we feel pessimistic when we remember the incredible odds against the first Union organizers who won great concessions for all workers? We are winning and we will continue to win no matter how bleak our reality is right now. Undoubtedly, Rehab Counselors were the key voters and force that elected Robyn Tenensap as our Chair, me and the new Executive team, people who wanted change, democracy and accountability in our Union. We as Rehab Counselors should be very proud of our history of speaking up!

Recently, a member told me they were afraid to be active and I said, that's good, being afraid is a source of strength. That fear, like adrenaline, forces us to think in new ways and act in rational ways that prioritizes the needs of our Union members above us all. So be afraid but don't let it stop you from joining in and supporting your Union colleagues. Say no to characterization, or isolation of Union members who aren't the same as you. Embrace our differences, offer support to the person who is ostracized by management. No Union member should support management in discrediting a fellow worker no matter what they do because Management will use that against you and your co-workers. Don't let Management buy your loyalty by looking the other way for you while disciplining other members. If you are good at your job, you owe it to those who are having a hard time your strength and support. Being good at your job doesn't mean that they won't screw you when the time comes (forgive my French)!

### **Rehab Re-organization is a Done Deal! The Cat is Out of the Bag**

Let's stop pretending. Though we asked the DOR Administration about the change-over likely to occur where SVRCs will no longer be able to perform certain functions of their jobs, we did not get an honest and truthful answer. Word in the field is that this changeover is very likely to occur come July 2010. Since management has been told that honesty helps prevent rumors and fear and since they have ignored this, we need to write our own story until we are given the truth.

What this means is that QRPs will only be able to perform certain "higher" level functions while SVRCs will be relegated to lower level tasks. There will be no layoffs but SVRCs will be eliminated through attrition. Perhaps QRPs will become "mini" supervisors in charge of approving the work of the SVRCs and PAs since it is expected that more PAs will be hired to do lower level work. I love the support staff but my experience is that many of them are not able to do Rehab Counselor work. They are not paid enough to care and they stick to their defined job duties because there is no incentive to go above and beyond and who can blame them? Some PAs/SSAs can barely type and our jobs are 95 percent administrative. It's going to be a lot of fun as a QRP telling my respected and experienced SVRC colleagues that I disagree with their ways of doing things. I can just picture a young new grad QRP telling a 30 year veteran SVRC that they know better because they have a degree. We all know that the only way to learn how to do a job is by doing it and not by reading sterile and out of touch textbooks.

And then there's the 10 percent pay increase for QRPs. 10 percent is not enough for me to sign on to become a manager of a caseload that many others will be working on. 10 percent will not compensate for the increased level of stress that I will face. I can just imagine all the mixed up communication that will occur when several people work with our clients. Clients will be confused more than ever. QRPS will say one thing, while the support staff will say other things. It's a sure set-up to be at each other's throats. And word is that all these new systems are not organized and chaotic at best. We can't even have consistency in practices between offices now. How will that occur when a whole new system is imposed?

Eliminating staff at this time is just pure madness. We know that services are being severely

compromised now with or without the furloughs and the growing demand for services due to the failure of our economy. The icing on the cake is that all QRPS will be expected to handle 150 cases, a sure recipe for failure for caring and quality services. If RSA is listening, they must be sticking their head deeply in the sand to ignore the failure to meet our ADA mandates. We're being told that the new computer system will make this caseload size a breeze, even as more and more checks and balances are built into the new system to micro-manage the Counselors work. Get ready for pop-ups and printouts ad nauseum!

I foresee more mental and physical illness. Nothing seems to give. More procedures and rules continue to be added. While we feel sympathy for management, we need them to start speaking up too. Becoming a supervisor does not mean that you give up basic principles of caring and decency. Counselors are increasingly speaking up displaying their leadership in the effort to provide quality services to the disabled and Management can no longer hide and fail to speak up too about what is simply not right! We also need to support the Rehab Specialists who are part of our Occupational Group. Word is that their positions may be affected too.

Your Chair Robyn Tenesap and other Counselor representatives will be attending a Labor-Management meeting in February. This is going to be a very hard year but don't let them tell you to "do your best" because they don't say you're doing your best as they write you up and discipline you for not being able to meet impossible casework demands.

Ask your supervisors to get answers from Sacramento about this re-organization and insist that we be allowed to give input. Join us in speaking up and demanding the truth and that case load sizes be manageable and that the more stress we feel, the less likely our clients are to be successful, a disservice to people with disabilities.

### **Fill out the Organizational Climate Survey!**

We encourage everyone to fill out the Organizational Climate Survey sent out by CO (Thompson) on 12-23-09. It gives us a chance to tell Management how we feel about our job, our RS and our DA. Do you think anyone will listen? Only if enough of us respond, they might open their eyes.

### **Some helpful contact information:**

Union website: [www.afscme2620.org](http://www.afscme2620.org) Sacramento Bee website: [http://www.sacbee.com/static/weblogs/the\\_state\\_worker/](http://www.sacbee.com/static/weblogs/the_state_worker/) Add your comments to the blog to get attention. Identify yourself as a member of AFSCME Union Local 2620. California Coalition for Counselor Licensure: <http://www.caccl.org> Communication website: <http://svrcgrp.info/> - Paul Lane - Webmaster SVRC Concerns Group - Contact Dave Dwyer at [dmcldwyer@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dmcldwyer@sbcglobal.net) Rehabilitation Occupational Chair for SVRCs/QRPs - Robyn Tenensap - [robyn.roc@gmail.com](mailto:robyn.roc@gmail.com) Union Local President - Steve Shanahan [s.r.shanahan@att.net](mailto:s.r.shanahan@att.net)

Director of State Operations (Sacramento) - Pam Manwiller  
[pam.manwiller@ca.afscme57.org](mailto:pam.manwiller@ca.afscme57.org) Business Agent (LA) - Bob Battle -  
[robert.battle@ca.afscme57.org](mailto:robert.battle@ca.afscme57.org) (Please contact Pam in the North and Bob in the South for  
concerns about working situations.) Business Agent (Sacramento) - Cliff Tillman -  
represents the Central part of the state  
[cliff.tillman@ca.afscme57.org](mailto:cliff.tillman@ca.afscme57.org)  
Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) website:  
<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/index.html>  
Janette Shell, RSA's California Liaison, [Janette.Shell@ed.gov](mailto:Janette.Shell@ed.gov)

Phone numbers: Sacramento AFSCME - 800-858-0442 LA AFSCME - 800-698-6553

AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee American Federation of State, County and  
Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO 1625 L Street, N.W. Washington, DC 20036-5687 Phone  
Numbers: Tel: 202-429-1000 TTY: 202-659-0446 FAX: 202-429-1293  
[gmcentee@afscme.org](mailto:gmcentee@afscme.org)

Continue to write Letters regarding pay increases and other concerns to:

Anthony Sauer, Director,  
Department of Rehabilitation 721  
Capitol Mall Sacramento, CA  
95814  
(916) 263-8700

and continue to write to: Kim Belshe', Secretary California Health and Human Services  
(This agency oversees DOR and makes contract recommendations to the Governor). 1600  
Ninth Street, Room 460 Sacramento, CA 95814

and

Paulette Baker Labor Relations Officer DOR 721 Capitol Mall Sacramento, CA 95814  
[pbaker@dor.ca.gov](mailto:pbaker@dor.ca.gov)

Also:

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger State Capitol Building Sacramento, CA 95814 Phone:  
916-445-2841 Fax: 916-445-4633 For local offices or to send e-mail see:  
<http://gov.ca.gov/interact#contact>

First Lady Maria Shriver  
(Same address, phone and fax as above)  
(Maria Shriver has expressed concern for people with Disabilities.)

Debbie Endsley is responsible for overseeing contract negotiations. We have to let him  
and everyone else know that we are not giving up until we are paid at professional

standards.

**Debbie Endsley, Director Department of Personnel Administration 1515 S Street,  
North Building, Suite 400 Sacramento, California 95811-7246**

(Please do not use DOR e-mail to send messages about your concerns.)

**Remember our theme:**

We create taxpayers by helping people with disabilities return to work.

Happy New Year and stay warm!

**Steve Shanahan, President  
AFSCME Local 2620/BU 19**

**Note regarding e-mail: If you would like to be removed from this mailing list, please respond with "Remove" in the subject line. If you know someone who should be on this mailing list such as a new Counselor, please let me know and I will add them to the list. If you would like to contribute information to this e-mail, please send a brief summary and be sure to identify yourself and your location. Please be careful when forwarding these e-mails. Please do not forward this e-mail to individuals outside of DOR and avoid using DOR e-mail as much as possible.**

**If you are on this list twice, let us know.**