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Open Letter – In Support of CUPE 2073 Workers and the Deaf Community Affected by the CHS Strike

Date: May 24, 2025

To:
Canadian Hearing Services Leadership, Provincial and Federal Government Officials, and the General Public

We write this letter in full solidarity with the members of **CUPE Local 2073**, who are currently on strike across 15 Canadian Hearing Services (**CHS**) offices throughout Ontario. As a national Deaf-led advocacy organization, the Canada Deaf Grassroots Movement (**CDGM**) strongly condemns the serious disruption of life-saving and essential services for Deaf, Deaf Indigenous, hard-of-hearing and DeafBlind (**DDIHHDB**) Ontarians as a result of **CHS**'s ongoing mismanagement and apparent disregard for community wellbeing.

Over the past several weeks, **CDGM** has heard directly from impacted community members. The stories are deeply disturbing:

- A Deaf individual who relies on a critical prescription was scheduled to attend a medical appointment with an **ASL** interpreter — only to be contacted by **CHS** and told to reschedule due to the strike. The delay placed his life at risk.
- Numerous others have reported cancelled or postponed appointments, interpreter shortages, and lack of access to vital programs including newcomer support, mental health counseling, and literacy services.

This is not just a labour dispute — it is a matter of human rights, accessibility, and dignity. The **DDIHHDB** community in Ontario is being disconnected, destabilized, and harmed. The erosion of trust in **CHS** is growing by the day.

We call on **CHS** leadership to:

- Return to the bargaining table in good faith with **CUPE 2073**.
- Respect and value the frontline workers — many of whom are Deaf themselves — who make **CHS** services possible.
- Acknowledge the harm being done to **DDIHHDB** communities and issue a public apology.

We also call on:

- The Ontario government to intervene immediately to protect accessibility and ensure essential services are not left to collapse.
- The general public and community allies stand in support of **CUPE 2073** workers and demand accountability from CHS leadership.

It is heartbreaking to witness **CHS** — once a well-trusted community agency — operate like a disconnected, profit-focused machine, with seemingly no empathy, no transparency, and no cultural understanding of the Deaf and hard of hearing communities it is supposed to serve.

CDGM stands firmly with workers, interpreters, and the **DDIHHDB** community members whose health, communication access, and lives are at risk. We will continue to raise awareness and fight for the community's right to access vital services without fear, delay, or disruption.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Wood
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