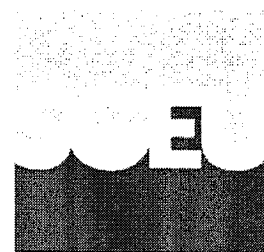


CUPE UPDATE ON COALITION

BARGAINING COMMUNIQUE #8



SAHO's Susan Antosh spins again

Everyone knows SAHO is refusing to bargain and won't even engage in formal face-to-face negotiations with the unions.

So what did SAHO president Susan Antosh have to say when health care providers demonstrated outside the SAHO convention in Regina on Tuesday, April 13.

She told the media that SAHO is fully prepared to have "further discussions" with the unions. It was another example of Susan Antosh spinning and stretching the truth. What she didn't tell the media is that those discussions had to be about "the final offer". She also didn't explain SAHO was only prepared to "discuss" the final offer, not bargain.

The unions received a letter on April 14 from SAHO's Bernie Young which was dated April 13 (the same day as Ms. Antosh's comments to the media) about SAHO's true intent. In the letter Mr. Young says SAHO is prepared to meet, but only if it is to discuss items of concern about the language in the final offer.

Once again, the media was ahead of the bargaining committee when it comes to how SAHO shares their information.

In other words, SAHO still refuses to bargain.

Try this on for size!

SAHO's final offer is like being told you have to wear a straight jacket to work. You and other health care providers refuse, stating it won't improve patient care or help to recruit and retain staff. You want to discuss other options. But SAHO and the government refuse to negotiate. Refuse to budge. Months pass.

There is growing concern about SAHO's treatment of health care providers. What does SAHO do? It offers to have "further discussions" with the unions to talk about the design, cut and colour of the straight jacket.

Sound familiar?

Unions tell SAHO they must do better

The tri-union bargaining committee sent a joint letter to SAHO on March 5, stating our members reject the so-called "final package" presented to the three health care provider unions on January 27.

We invited SAHO back to the bargaining table to negotiate a collective agreement that would be acceptable to all parties.

The following day, a person appointed by the government met with representatives of SAHO and the three unions (CUPE, SEIU-West and SGEU) to talk about the bargaining impasse. All three unions said they wanted to get back to the bargaining table. Although we met several times with the government appointee, no bargaining meetings took place.

That's because SAHO told us it is only interested in "discussions" about the final offer. It is not prepared to bargain.

The government and employer representatives still don't get the picture. All three unions have told them consistently that SAHO's proposed take away language is not welcome in our collective agreements. Our members gave us very clear instructions about this in June 2009 and then again in February 2010. SAHO doesn't think that these changes would have a negative effect on your work experience. You have told us they are wrong.

Finally, on April 14 we received the letter from SAHO's Bernie Young (see above) in response to our March 5 letter. The letter makes it clear that SAHO and the government are only interested in tweaking their take aways. SAHO says it is prepared to "discuss" the details of how their "take aways" can be worded, without changing their intent. That's not bargaining.

CUPE, SEIU-West and SGEU want to bargain with a party who has the ability and the will to "negotiate" in its truest sense. SAHO continues to disappoint.

On April 21, Bernie Young sent another letter, again offering to discuss items of concern about the language in the final offer, but this time providing actual dates SAHO's committee was available.

The Unions will be responding today indicating we are prepared to **bargain** and proposing that we meet on April 29, 2010. We await SAHO's response.

Health care providers turn-up the pressure

Health care providers have turned up the pressure on government MLAs in an effort to persuade both the government and SAHO to get back to the bargaining table. Health care providers have been organizing rallies and meetings with their local MLA, as well as calling, writing and emailing them. Your actions are having an impact. Your continued support is needed.

Your bargaining committee is committed to ensuring all health care providers achieve a fair contract. Through its essential services legislation and stalling tactics, the government is trying to force health care providers to accept its final offer. They have seriously underestimated our membership. Intimidating health care providers won't solve staff shortages or improve patient care. Only a fair deal will.

CUPE Bargaining Committee
April 23, 2010