

CUPE Health Care Council Bargaining Update #15 – September 4/09

Your bargaining committee started the week of August 31st – September 4th by meeting with our coalition partners (SEIU and SGEU) to formalize discussions that were then held with SAHO on September 1, 2009. The meeting with SAHO on Tuesday concluded with some agreement around process and dates for coalition negotiations to commence where SAHO's initial monetary package will be tabled and common proposals will be discussed. We will be receiving the initial monetary offer on September 22 and the provider union bargaining committees will be reviewing the offer for the remainder of the week.

Wednesday of this week, we met with the employer with the aim to continue discussions on outstanding non-monetary issues, prior to the commencement of coalition bargaining later this month. The union raised five articles for discussion and was initially met with only a continuance of “no agreement, not interested in any way, shape or form”. We did however; achieve greater length of debate on two proposals.

One of the proposals aimed at securing better language to ensure employees who work stand by (e.g. Technologists) would gain the ability to schedule equal hours of rest during a scheduled shift to offset the hours performed on call back. Ultimately, and unfortunately, the proposal was, once again, rejected by the Employer, who stated that this rejection gave them “great angst”. The level of angst (concern) was not enough to move them off of their position.

The second union proposal that received lengthier discussion was on the two Letters of Understanding on the full utilization of Licensed Practical Nurses. Once again we heard from SAHO and the employers of their unwillingness to accept these proposals. They stated clearly that infringement upon “management rights to staffing” was a concern, along with their discomfort with the concept of developing policies that would assist managers in understanding and implementing our LPN's full scope of practice. When confronted with examples of inconsistency in directives to LPN's from managers or supervising RNs, the employers remained entrenched and stated they did not want the responsibility of “telling managers what to do”.

Our next bargaining dates are set for September 22 – 25, 2009.

Stay strong and stay tuned...

In Solidarity,

Your CUPE Health Care Bargaining Committee