

May 25, 2009

AN OPEN LETTER TO CUPE HEALTH CARE MEMBERS:

After 14 months of negotiations on a new collective agreement, we are disappointed to report little progress has been made with SAHO and the employers. They continue to undervalue your concerns in the workplace and proposals at the bargaining table. They also refuse to give us any kind of monetary package.

Delegates attending the CUPE Health Care Council's conference earlier this month told the Council that if no progress was made in contract talks the week of May 15, we needed to conduct a strike vote. Your local executive and members of your bargaining committee are now organizing membership meetings for that purpose. Our plan is to have the vote completed by June 8th.

In addition to the complete lack of a monetary offer on wages, benefits and differentials, the employers have refused to address some key areas of our bargaining proposals. They have simply said they are not interested. Some of those areas include:

- A union proposal to prohibit the contracting-out of our work.
- Wage protection concerning vaccinations, outbreaks and quarantines and time lost resulting from same.
- Proper bereavement protection in the event of non-traditional funeral arrangements (ie. interment at a later date).
- A provision that would ensure all LPN's are allowed to perform their full scope of practice.
- Informing the union of the numbers of volunteers and the scope of their activities in the workplace.
- A provision concerning the right to refuse dangerous work.

In addition to their continued refusal to address your concerns at the table, the employer continues to push some major concessions at the table. These include:

- A provision to send employees home without pay if they refuse to take a flu vaccination.

- The right to transfer employees on a temporary or permanent basis to any other facility within the health region, whenever it suits their purposes, or make your existing position, a multi-site position. You may be required to travel between two communities. You could be responsible for transportation costs to and from any new permanent place of work.
- Permanent employees would be unable to apply for other positions until they have been in their current position for 365 days.
- The right to force you to stay in a temporary position for its entire term.
- A provision that laid off or displaced employees may only bump into vacancies or bump less senior employees within their facilities.
- A provision that would average home care workers hours of work on a daily basis within a 15 hour period. The employer could assign an employee 2 hours in the morning, 2 hours in the afternoon and four hours in the evening.
- A provision that would force employees to use vacation credits before they use time in lieu (TIL).

These are just a few of the areas of concern at the bargaining table. The issues are highly important as they would have a huge impact on members in the workplace.

We are at the point where we need to show the employers, SAHO and the government the 12,600 CUPE members in health care in Saskatchewan have had enough of these bargaining tactics from them and are solidly behind their bargaining committee. That can be done by voting to give your bargaining council a strong strike mandate.

A strong mandate will show the employers, SAHO and the government that CUPE members will not stand for second rate treatment in the workplace.

A strong mandate will ensure the strength of our entire membership is felt at the bargaining table.

A strong mandate will show CUPE Health Care Providers stand firmly behind their bargaining committee.

Please support your bargaining committee's efforts to achieve a fair and equitable collective agreement on your behalf.

In Solidarity,
Gordon Campbell
President
CHCC



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