

COALITION BARGAINING COMMUNIQUE #4



SASKATOON – Representatives of the three Health Provider Unions held discussions with the Labour Relations and Mediation Branch of the Ministry of Labour on December 2nd. Based on those discussions the Unions have agreed to participate in an assessment of the bargaining process which will be done by the Branch's Executive Director. The Unions are determined to make this bargaining process work. To that end we are willing to engage in an assessment and explore alternative options to get negotiations moving. One option might be conciliation. Conciliation is an agreed-to process where an independent third party acts as a go-between in the bargaining process in an effort to resolve outstanding issues.

We would like to note that our willingness to explore alternative options is not about examining our relationship with SAHO. It is about maintaining and improving quality health care services in Saskatchewan. How do we do this? The Unions have consistently proposed that addressing the recruitment and retention issues in a comprehensive way is necessary in demonstrating the value of services offered by ALL health care providers in this province. You have told us that we need to achieve a fair and equitable collective agreement that recognizes YOU as an equal player on the health care team.

It is notable that SAHO is defending its general wage increase proposal by describing it as 'competitive'. The Unions have questioned the SAHO data. What is it competitive with? To date, SAHO refuses to share its data. The Unions can only assume SAHO does not want to reveal it because it is skewed, based on false assumptions and likely incomplete. This is another way that SAHO continues to demonstrate how little they value health care providers.

SAHO's pathetic general wage offer, limited market adjustments and its rollbacks combined with its offensive media campaign are designed to insult, misinform and to create conflict between health providers. At this point in collective bargaining, who benefits from our members' solidarity? We all do. SAHO is intent upon dividing us. Our experience shows that when Health Provider Union Members maintain a united front in the face of SAHO's divisive tactics, we achieve fair and equitable collective agreements.

The Unions are uncertain about the status of our bargaining dates next week. SAHO continues to take the position that they will not meet face-to-face. At present, we are waiting to hear from the Executive Director of the Labour Relations and Mediation Branch as to the commencement of the assessment process. We hope that this process will not be lengthy.

Thank you for your continued support and interest in this process. Please watch for further updates.

In Solidarity,
Your Coalition Bargaining Committee (SGEU, CUPE and SEIU-West)
December 3, 2009

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