



For Immediate Release:

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Health provider unions disappointed in SAHO's unfair tactics

Regina: CUPE, SEIU-West and SGEU, the three unions representing 25,000 health care providers in the province, met with the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO) today. They were disappointed to be told SAHO refuses to bargain and continues to push for significant concessions and unfair pay reductions.

“Collectively, we are proposing reasonable solutions to SAHO’s concerns while maintaining equitable treatment for health care providers,” says Gordon Campbell, President of the CUPE Health Care Council. “Our members continue to ask why their weekends and evenings away from their families are less valuable than other members of the health care team. They ask why they are the only ones in the health sector that are expected to pay more for licensing fees, yet are reimbursed less for work expenses. We attempted to address these important equity issues in our most recent offer to settle which was tabled in May. We asked that SAHO reconsider our fair offer,” he says.

Bonnie Erickson, the Chairperson of the SGEU Health Providers Negotiating Committee, says SAHO and the health regions have made no movement at all in respect to the final offer tabled in January for SGEU members. “We were abundantly clear when we met with SAHO – no movement will not get a tentative agreement. Their ongoing refusal to address the disparities created by the employer and the Wall government has to stop. After today, we get the strong sense that they really do not want to bargain a tentative agreement with us,” she states.

Barbara Cape, SEIU-West President, points out that while SAHO has adamantly refused to take any of the significant SEIU-West rollbacks off the table, they have also included a cut to retro pay of all health care providers which would see pay rates reduced to 2007 rates from April 1, 2010 to the date of signing. “Who would vote in favour of a proposal that reduces their overall entitlement to negotiated general wage increases? It does not make sense. Our members view SAHO’s strong arm tactics as a blatant display of disrespect for health care providers and the role that they play in the delivery of health care services in this province”, Cape says.

Erickson adds, "There is compelling evidence that the health providers are understaffed, overworked and stressed. Once again, SAHO's latest response shows a lack of respect for health care providers while their employers further reduce hours and cut services in the health regions. Staffing issues affecting the timely provision of health care will remain ongoing until an equitable resolve is achieved. Our health care system, workers and our patients, clients and residents need to see some improvement soon".

The unions will be considering a range of options as a result of SAHO's continued failure to agree to negotiate a fair and equitable tentative agreement.

The province's health care providers include special care aides, licensed practical nurses, food services workers, laundry, housekeeping and activity personnel, sterile processing workers, maintenance, administrative, clerical, therapeutic and recreational workers, and medical technologists and technicians.

SEIU-West represents 11,000 health care providers in four health regions. SGEU represents 2,000 health care providers in three health regions. CUPE Health Care Council represents 12,600 health care providers in five health regions.

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