

## **CUPE health care providers achieve settlement**

**August 13:** The CUPE Health Care Council and two other provider unions finally achieved a tentative agreement today with the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO) after nearly two years of contract negotiations.

The agreement in principle, reached around midnight, came after a long week of bargaining in both Saskatoon and Regina. It was signed by the unions and SAHO this evening.

The proposed settlement covers all 25,000 health care providers in the province represented by the CUPE Health Care Council, SEIU and SGEU.

The tri-union bargaining coalition did not achieve many of their bargaining goals, but they successfully defeated most of SAHO's demands for concessions and secured modest monetary gains for members.

"We believe it is the best agreement possible given the SaskParty government's essential services legislation which crippled our power at the table," says CUPE Health Care Council President Gordon Campbell.

Under the legislation passed just before negotiations began, more than 80% of CUPE's health care providers were deemed essential and unable to strike.

"We've been forced to swallow a few chicken bones and that doesn't feel too good," says Campbell, but adds there is a lot to be proud of.

"CUPE's bargaining victory lies in defeating many of SAHO's demands including the employers' controversial proposal on multi-sites, and negotiating a far, far better deal than the employers' so-called final offer," he says. "That's no small feat – one we achieved because of the membership's support and solidarity."

The agreement preserves seniority rights in the area of lay-offs, provides improved shift differentials and full retroactivity on the wage rates for members (including retirees and those on lay-off).

Full details of the agreement will be released once the information is shared with the membership and the ratification vote completed.