

Health staff treated unfairly

BY GORDON CAMPBELL, THE LEADER-POST JUNE 3, 2010

In his May 26 column, "Injecting politics into health talks the wrong kind of medicine", Murray Mandryk comments that perhaps the Saskatchewan Party government's treatment of the 'other unions', CUPE, SGEU and SEIU-West, is not fair and equitable.

It is some comfort to see that the heavy handed tactics of the government and SAHO are finally getting some attention. But his criticisms are too mild when one considers that the government and SAHO's final offer seeks to ensure that health-care workers receive lesser treatment than RNs and RPNs in many important areas such as payment of professional fees, kilometer rates and differentials for working evenings and weekends.

The problems with the final offer don't end there. In CUPE's case, the final offer includes major concessions to the collective agreement that will negatively affect health-care workers' treatment in the workplace. For example, the final offer, if accepted, will take away the employees' right to choose where they work and live. Employers would have the ability to force employees to work in two or more communities anywhere in the health region. Travel time and mileage reimbursement for these 'multi-site' workers is not guaranteed. CUPE members are very concerned about how such language will affect them and the employer's ability to recruit and retain staff. Many say they will resign if such language comes into effect.

There are several other equally disturbing terms and conditions tied to the 9.5 per cent wage offer. SAHO conveniently neglects to include such details in its taxpayer-funded campaign to sell its final offer to the public and to our members.

Gordon Campbell

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