

CUPE Health Care Council Bargaining Update #1- Sept 12, 2008

HISTORICAL GAINS IN JEOPARDY

The CUPE Health Care Council of Unions, which bargains on behalf of 13,000 Saskatchewan health care workers employed in five health regions, began contract negotiations Tuesday, Sept 9th in Regina with the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations (SAHO).

The collective agreement between CUPE and SAHO expired on March 31, 2008. CUPE is the first among the three health provider unions to commence negotiations.

The CUPE Health Care Council represents health care workers in all classifications under the jurisdiction of the provider unions, including Special Care Aides, Licensed Practical Nurses, Food Services Workers, Laundry, Housekeeping and Activity personnel, Maintenance, Clerical, Medical Diagnostic, Therapeutic and Recreational Technologists and Technicians.

Proposal packages were exchanged and the remainder of the week was used to review proposals.

The proposals developed by CUPE are based largely on membership direction to improve your working lives in the areas of:

- Workers' Rights and Working Conditions
- Compensation
- Benefits
- Recruitment/ Retention
- Job Security

SAHO and the health employers tabled an extremely regressive package that would negatively impact your quality of life in areas of retention, mobility, health and safety, workload, union representation and participation, discipline, seniority, postings and vacancies. In short, these proposals reflect a desire to utilize workers as they see fit with little regard to your working lives, your job security and your hard won rights.

Your bargaining committee voiced strong opposition to SAHO's backward plans to effectively wipe out the historical gains we have achieved in previous rounds of bargaining.

The two sides will meet September 29 in Saskatoon and about every third week until mid December.

Clearly, a great deal of work lies ahead. Look for future updates.

In Solidarity,

Proud members of your CUPE Health Care Bargaining team: Gordon Campbell (Chair), Pearl Blommaert (Vice Chair), Sandra Seitz (Recording Secretary), Jim Carr (Treasurer), Carol McKnight (Local 4777), Sinda Cathcart (Local 3967), Rhonda Oneschuk (Local 4980), Brian Manegre (Local 5111), Vicky O'Dell (Local 5999) and CUPE National Servicing Representatives: Mike Keith (Spokesperson), Suzanne Posyniak, Elaine Ehman, Gary Day, Patty Brockman, Ken Jattansingh and Rhonda Heisler.