

COMMUNIQUE #22



November 24, 2005

The bargaining committee met with SAHO and the employers in Saskatoon on November 22nd, 23rd, and 24th, 2005, but spent very little time together in face-to-face meetings.

On November 23rd, coalition representatives from all the health provider unions (CUPE, SEIU, SGEU) were called to a meeting with Byron Pointer, Vice President of Human Resources, SAHO and Mike Shaw, Associate Deputy Minister of Health to discuss the status of bargaining.

During the meeting, Mike Shaw expressed concerns with the slow progress of bargaining and reiterated a desire to see negotiations conclude without a strike by the health care providers, to which the unions echoed their agreement. He also announced the availability of funding to address some of the equity issues that will appear at the coalition table (ie. premium pay). The parties were asked to focus on priority issues and exchange those priorities in an effort to reach the coalition table. The coalition representatives emphasized the need to see movement by SAHO on some of their priority items before they are prepared to withdraw any more of their proposals.

Following the meeting with the Unions, Mike Shaw met with representatives from SAHO and the employer bargaining committees and requested that the employer committee prepare a list of their priority items for exchange with the coalition committees.

However, SAHO has insisted on a comprehensive response to their last proposal to all outstanding items before the exchange of any priority item list. CUPE has complied with SAHO's request and tabled a comprehensive response to all outstanding articles.

Both SAHO and the employers and the CUPE bargaining committees were instructed to clear their calendars in order to complete negotiations in upcoming weeks. We have therefore added additional bargaining dates of November 30th, December 1st, 2nd, 5th, 6th and 7th. We hope to increase the time spent in face-to-face bargaining sessions with the employer on those dates.

We again wish to thank the CUPE membership across the province for their commitment and dedication to their bargaining priorities as indicated by the successful strike mandate. Your continued support will allow the bargaining committee to focus on your priorities for our new collective agreement!

For more information visit the CUPE Health Council website at: www.cupesaskhec.ca