



URGENT COMMUNICATION

On January 19, 2005, the Health Care Provider Unions (CUPE, SEIU and SGEU) met with SAHO and the Employers to negotiate funding and plan contents of the Extended Health Benefits and Enhanced Dental Plan (EHB) at a common table.

The Health Care Provider Unions clearly identified that we are not interested in rollbacks within our current Collective Agreement(s), nor are we interested in either reducing or eliminating future wage increases to resolve the EHB funding shortfall, particularly when other groups within the Health Care sector have not been faced with such choices. As a basic principle, the Health Care Provider Unions have a collective desire for one EHB plan with a common level of benefits for all employees and an equitable funding model.

A proposal was tabled by the Health Care Provider Unions which, if accepted by SAHO and the Employers, would ensure equity for all employees within the Health Care sector within the province of Saskatchewan. The Health Care Provider Unions withdrew all previous proposals for improvements to the EHB which was a significant move. This proposal ensured maintenance of the plan through the term of the next Collective Agreement and the subsequent process of negotiated changes thereto. As well, any changes to the EHB implemented for the benefit of other groups of employees within the Health Care sector would be enjoyed by Health Care Providers.

SAHO and the Employer representatives rejected the Health Care Provider Unions proposal entirely. They insisted that EHB must be funded within the 2.1% of straight time payroll, which was agreed upon during the 1999 set of Provincial Negotiations. **THIS TRANSLATES INTO CUTS TO BENEFIT LEVELS.** The only other options provided by SAHO to improve upon this funding are: to take the monies out of the meagre mandate or to accept rollbacks out of your current Collective Agreement(s).

When asked whether SAHO and Employers were comfortable with introducing a two-tiered EHB plan within the Health Care sector, the response received was "This is purely a business decision". Obviously, SAHO and the Employers believe it makes better economic sense to ignore our pleas for equity within Health Care. This is why the Health Care Provider Unions have determined that we should take our pleas elsewhere and we have submitted an urgent request to Government for a meeting to discuss these critical issues.

On January 19, SAHO and the Employers again issued the ultimatum: **"If Government has not corrected the funding formula by February 15, 2005, SAHO will unilaterally cut benefits to the members of the Health Care Provider Unions"**.

The Health Care Provider Unions believe it is necessary to have our membership(s) fully aware of these circumstances. Please be assured that we will react to whatever actions are taken by SAHO and we will continue to update you on all further developments.

We urge you to call or e-mail the **Honourable Premier Lorne Calvert**: @ (306) 651-1211 (Constituency) or (306) 787-9433 (Legislature); e-mail: premier@gov.sk.ca and/or the **Honourable John Nilson, Minister of Health**: @ (306) 751-7740 (Constituency) or (306) 787-7345 (Legislature); e-mail: minister@health.gov.sk.ca

Tell him we insist upon EQUITY within the health care sector and to ensure the viability of one EHB plan for all health sector employees. Tell him that the 25,000 Saskatchewan Health Care Providers who are part of the Health Care TEAM should be valued by SAHO, the Employers and Government as an equal player.