

October 19, 2009

Dear Member:

This letter is intended to provide you with an update on the state of negotiations; to clarify SAHO's monetary offer; and to provide you with an update on our challenge to the Essential Services Legislation.

As you are aware, SAHO and the Health Regions have insisted on bargaining in the media and their messages to you have been misleading and a direct attempt to divide and conquer our membership. We must stay together and not fall into this trap. Look to your local union officers, CUPE staff and the CUPE bargaining committee for accurate information.

SAHO's monetary offer, tabled on October 16th, added five jobs to the market adjustments. They indicated that in order for a position to be considered for an adjustment it must meet two criteria. The wage needs to be lower than the average of the wages for the same job in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia and the job must have demonstrated recruitment problems in Saskatchewan (vacancies). Unless both conditions are met, they will not consider market adjustments for any classification. The added jobs are MLT, Nuclear Medicine Tech, MLT/X-ray Tech, Polysomnographic Tech and Ophthalmic Assistant. It is important to note that **SAHO has not included related jobs (Specialty, Tech II & III, etc.) in its offer.**

Your bargaining committee believes there are more jobs that require adjustments and we will be pursuing that at the table. We believe this movement by SAHO on the 16th is a direct result of emails, phone calls and other actions taken by the CUPE membership over the last number of weeks. Keep it up!

The following is a detailed analysis of SAHO's offer:

- SAHO has offered to "expedite the job evaluation process for LPNs to determine the impacts of changed educational requirements which could mean an increase of over 19%." This offer is easily misinterpreted to mean that SAHO will give LPNs a 19% increase. This proposal is meaningless. It does not guarantee LPNs an increase in pay and it does not guarantee that SAHO and the health regions won't try to manipulate the JJE review to avoid an LPN rate increase. **SAHO has been stalling the JJE maintenance review process for LPNs for many months.** CUPE strongly supports the recognition of LPNs' increased qualifications by the JJE Plan. This JJE process should be a priority and it should be happening independent of contract negotiations.
- SAHO wants the Provider Unions to hand over control of the Joint JJE Plan. Given SAHO's record, a SAHO controlled plan would be **disastrous** for health care workers.
- SAHO says that it will address standards of practice and legislation that applies to LPNs. This statement is misleading. SAHO's offer is in response to a CUPE proposal that would ensure that LPNs would be able to work to their full scope of practice. The wording of SAHO's counter offer just means "**business as usual**". Managers and supervisors could continue to ignore LPNs' competencies under SAHO's offer.
- SAHO continues to **refuse to table its proposals on key parity issues** such as a shift differential, weekend premium, overtime rates and professional fees. They say they won't table proposals on these items until we agree to their concessions. This is the most arrogant, unbalanced employer tactic we have seen at a bargaining table.

- There is **very little change to the long list of SAHO's take-away proposals** since we last reported. These concessions would negatively affect your work/family balance, your job satisfaction and the quality services you provide as a health care worker. Here are some examples:
 - the ability to make your job multi-site (shifts in 2 or more facilities and/or 2 or more communities) on a temporary or permanent basis and without your agreement;
 - the elimination of the overtime premium paid when you work three or more consecutive weekends;
 - if as the senior employee you are missed for an overtime or relief shift, you will no longer be compensated for the missed shift;
 - home care workers would be expected to work split shifts over 12 hour days with 8 hours rest between shifts, 6 days in a row.
- SAHO's says its wage offer of less than 10% over four years is "competitive." SAHO's offer is lower than the cost of living. It is lower than the average public sector wage settlement and not anywhere near what RNs and RPNs received in their contract settlement. The "efficiencies" tied to SAHO's wage offer are serious concessions. SAHO refuses to disclose the savings it hopes to generate with these concessions. We estimate that **the cost of these take-aways could very well equal the wage offer. In other words, you would pay for your own wage increase.**

Essential Services

We have filed applications at the Labour Relations Board on behalf of all five of our locals concerning the essential services lists we received in June. We are seeking orders:

- Prohibiting employers from declaring employees essential and placing them on call.
- Declaring any participation in job actions during off duty hours as permissible.
- Declaring it is the employer's responsibility under the act to identify which services CUPE members perform are essential.
- An order reducing the numbers of employees deemed essential in each classification.
- An order declaring that this legislation violates individuals' rights under the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

We will keep you updated concerning the progress of this critical action. Remember:

- The Union cannot control what SAHO puts out to the media
- Accurate information can be obtained from the Union.
- The current monetary offer is still conditional on the Union accepting all of the take aways on the table.

We need your continued support. Attend the provider union rally in front of the Saskatchewan Legislature on October 26 at 11:30 a.m. Contact your local union office for details.

We will be meeting with the Employers and SAHO the week of October 26th to discuss outstanding issues exclusive to CUPE members. We will once again insist they remove their regressive concession demands from the table.

In solidarity,

Your CUPE Health Care Council Bargaining Committee