



HEALTH CARE BARGAINING 2012

BULLETIN NO. 6 – November 2013

Dear CUPE Health Care Member,

As you are aware, your union, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, has been in the process of bargaining for a new collective agreement for your workplace. This collective agreement is the contract between you and your employer, and outlines your rights and responsibilities as an employee at your workplace.

Your collective agreement expired March 31, 2012, and CUPE has been at the table with your employers, who are represented by the Labour Relations Secretariat (LRS), attempting to negotiate a fair collective agreement.

Your bargaining team, represented by the CUPE Provincial Health Care Council (PHCC) has been working very hard to ensure that you receive a fair collective agreement. This bargaining update will provide you with important information pertaining to the bargaining process, as well as the status of bargaining to date.

Bargaining Process:

The bargaining process begins when CUPE members like you respond to a survey that your Local Union Executive and the PHCC provide for your feedback and priorities. These surveys help identify issues specific to your workplace (Local issues), as well as are combined with feedback from other CUPE workplaces to identify similarities (Central Table issues). Finally, CUPE joins with other health care unions to identify issues that all unions can work on together (Multi-union issues).

This is how CUPE's bargaining proposals are determined.

CUPE then meets with the LRS, following the expiry of your contract, to negotiate the inclusion of these proposals into your contract. At the same time, your employers also provide proposals to the LRS. The employers' proposals can include concessions (changes to the contract that could negatively impact you in your workplace).

Status of Bargaining:

Throughout the past number of months, CUPE, through the PHCC, has met with the LRS to negotiate amendments to the collective agreement. Unfortunately, because the provincial government announced the amalgamation of several rural regional health authorities in the Spring of 2012, bargaining did not commence until December of last year. Originally, the LRS refused to bargain, despite CUPE's position that the rural amalgamations should not delay our collective bargaining. As a result of the LRS refusing to negotiate, CUPE filed an Unfair Labour Practice in October 2012, which ultimately brought the parties together to come back to the table.

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Although negotiations seemed to be progressing reasonably well between December 2012 and March 2013, they stalled in May when the employer advised that they had decided to use a provincially appointed conciliation officer to assist the parties as bargaining was taking 'too long'.

Since that time there has been little progress with the employer, who still had many concessionary proposals on the table. CUPE's position throughout bargaining is that we are not willing to accept concessions.

We have also become frustrated at the length of time it has taken to arrange meeting dates with the LRS, prolonging the bargaining process. Following a meeting directly with government, in which CUPE expressed serious concerns with the lack of progress and the length of time it has taken thus far, and that our members have started to discuss options to force the government to take this process seriously, the LRS met with CUPE on November 15th and withdrew a large number of employer proposals, including numerous concessions.

Next Steps:

All health care support unions are in the same state of frustration. Two other health care unions have conducted strike votes and obtained overwhelming strike mandates. This is not an option we are ruling out; however, with the recent progress at the table we are asking that all members be patient as we continue to bargain.

On November 16th, the CUPE Provincial Health Care Council met with the Executives of all CUPE health care locals to discuss the progress of bargaining. At this meeting we outlined the status of bargaining to date and had discussions on moving forward. It was determined that because we have now seen meaningful movement from the LRS, we would continue bargaining, and will meet again as a group in January 2014 to review any progress that has been made. At that point in time, CUPE and the PHCC will determine what steps need to be taken to conclude a fair collective agreement.

In the interim, we encourage all members to contact CUPE with specific questions related to bargaining via our online web feedback form. We will do our best to answer members' questions or concerns. The web form can be found at: http://phcc.cupe.ca/BE_feedback.php. Remember you can always visit www.phcc.cupe.ca for bargaining updates.

We also encourage you to "like" the CUPE Manitoba Facebook page for updates on other work your union is doing, and visit cupe.mb.ca for more information on CUPE in Manitoba.

Lastly, we would like to thank all CUPE health care members for their patience and understanding throughout these negotiations. All other unions are facing similar challenges, and we are working together to get the best possible contract for our members.

Thank you,

Your Provincial Health Care Council and Bargaining Committee

Val Sobiak (Chair), Gwen Bennett, Debbie Boissonneault, Marion Butterfield, Morgan Chagnon, Barbara Greengrass, Demi Kuzyk-Bernier, Judy Lavallee, Yvon Leclerc, Ric McAlpine, Marie Nixon, John Reynolds, Marian Sawyer

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