

Bargaining Bulletin No. 1

SAHO

Date: *March 8, 2017*

Location: *Regina*

Greetings Sisters and Brothers,

On March 7, the coalition of health provider unions (SEIU-West, CUPE and SGEU) had our first meeting with the Sask. Association of Healthcare Organizations (SAHO) to begin the process of bargaining our new collective agreements. The parties did not formally exchange proposal packages, rather our discussions dealt with processes (traditional or collaborative) of negotiations, logistics, and some of the outside factors that could influence bargaining. When we talk about 'outside factors' we mean government.

You see government is not supposed to interfere in collective bargaining; while it is the funder of health care, the system is run by the regional health authorities. The theory behind this relationship is to let the employers (RHA's) and their negotiator (SAHO) achieve the best deal at the bargaining table without the influence/interference of politicians. Sadly, for everyone involved, government decided to interfere significantly.

In the middle of our meeting, while the provider unions were caucusing, SAHO came back into the room to deliver a message on behalf of the Minister of Finance. As many of you will have heard or read about, the Minister of Finance wrote to each union to outline that government Ministers and Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA's) were being asked to take a 3.5% wage reduction. Further to that, their political staffers were going to agree (voluntold?) to **nine** unpaid days off per year (equivalent to 3.5%). We were then 'invited' to give the government our ideas around how the unions were going to achieve the savings target within the public sector.

Let's be clear here, politicians make a heck of a lot more than most health care workers; the base salary of an MLA is approximately \$96,000/year...a 3.5% reduction brings their salary down to approximately \$93,000/year. Compare that same 3.5% reduction for someone working on the front line of health care for \$20-\$30/hour... a 3.5% reduction is like losing approximately two weeks of pay per year! That is a significantly different impact on a household budget!!

This hard target by the Sask Party government comes literally in the middle of our very first meeting with SAHO and the health regions to begin bargaining. The provider unions are now facing the threat of concession demands at the bargaining table, another reorganization of the health care structure (and the inevitable resulting chaos), changes in the governance of our benefit plans, and now this?!



If you have any questions or concerns about your workplace or your collective agreement, please call the Member Resource Centre (MRC) at 1-888-999-7348 ext. 2298. The MRC Officers are able to answer your questions and, if necessary, will forward your concerns to your workplace Union Representative.

Bargaining Bulletin No. 2

SAHO

This round of bargaining is going to be difficult, it's going to be troubled and it's going to test all of us. You have heard this before, every round of bargaining is more difficult than the last. We need all of our members to stand up with their union bargaining committee to demonstrate your support and determination that we need a fair and reasonable collective agreement that we can accept.

We have decided to set additional dates to meet after the upcoming budget address on March 22, where we may get further information about the Minister of Finance and the government's targets and directions. We will be meeting with our bargaining committees and our coalition of unions to analyze the potential impact to our proposals and establish bargaining plans.

We encourage you to share your questions and concerns about bargaining with the SEIU-West bargaining committee by contacting us through the Member Resource Center at 1-888-999-7348 Ext 2298 or contact us through the "contact us" form on SEIUWEST.ca.

Your participation in your Union makes your Union strong.

In Solidarity,

Your SEIU-West Provincial Bargaining Committee

CHR: Janice Platzke (SEIU-West Treasurer) • **FHHR:** Brenda Berry; Donna Gallant • **HHR:** Colleen Denniss • **SHR:** Judy Denniss; Rick Brown; Simone Corriveau; Kim Wyatt; Charlene Sarafin; • **Staff:** Bob Laurie (Dir. of Bargaining and Contract Enforcement); Russell Doell (Deputy Dir. of Bargaining and Contract Enforcement); Kerry Barrett (Negotiations Officer) • **President:** Barbara Cape