



CUPE COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS

Better Care. Healthier Communities.

September 26, 2022

Bargaining progress slows down over monetary, recruitment and retention issues

For most of the last two weeks, the constituent unions of the CBA have been at the bargaining table with the Health Employers' Association of BC (HEABC) working towards a tentative agreement. We had hoped to have good news about progress but, unfortunately, we are not satisfied with where negotiations stand at this time.

Your employer has resisted virtually all non-monetary proposals that would bridge the gap between ourselves and our colleagues who work in the Facilities sector. For example, not only did your employer come to the table with no plan to address recruitment and retention; they've actually resisted many of our proposals and ideas to make improvements in this area. In addition, your employer's monetary offer does not fully address the three biggest disparities in our agreement: wage rates, shift premiums, and vacation. In fact, their core monetary offer is less than what was offered to the Facilities Bargaining Association (FBA).

To be clear, we believe that workers in the FBA deserve every penny they have in their agreement; we simply want equal pay, premiums, and vacation for workers in the CBA. But the only message we are getting from your employer is that they disagree.

Your employer is also refusing to properly maintain the Joint Community Benefits Trust (JCBT), which provides members in community health with extended health, extended dental, and long-term disability. The JCBT was implemented to achieve a cost-effective yet equal level of benefits as the trusts covering other health care workers. Although we have made clear that the JCBT requires an immediate infusion of money, along with increased and ongoing contributions by the employer to avoid benefit reductions, the employer has not offered any additional monies. Instead, they expect CBA members to pay for maintaining the benefit trust from the money we would otherwise use to increase other parts of the agreement such as premium increases, vacation increases, and wage increases. In other words, concessions.

While progress has not been what we hoped, there is good news. During the last two weeks we have achieved language that covers the distribution of overtime, which we hope will begin to bring transparency and fairness to overtime opportunities, and that allows for full mobility with Health Authorities. But these alone will not begin to address recruitment and retention.

The bottom line is that your employer wants to offer us a deal that would see us fall further behind at a time when health care workers in the community have not only weathered a pandemic but continue to face the opioid crisis and chronic understaffing. Your committee is committed to fighting back, to closing the gap, and to ensuring you get the deal you deserve.

In solidarity,

Your Community Bargaining Association (CBA) Negotiating Committee