



Health Support Bargaining Update July 20, 2022

On Wednesday, May 17, the Health Support Bargaining Unit (Unifor, NSGEU and CUPE) reached an impasse in bargaining a new collective agreement with Nova Scotia Health and the IWK.

As a result, two days of conciliation were scheduled and the first one was July 19. This means both the unions and the employers are now using an outside mediation officer to attempt to finalize bargaining. Our bargaining committee met on Monday, July 18, prior to meeting with the employer, to focus on and finalize the proposals that have the greatest importance to their membership.

The first day of conciliation did not result in a deal. There are a small number of outstanding language items that need to be resolved, but monetary provisions are the largest outstanding issues. Our committee is focused on attaining the best possible collective agreement for our members. We have heard our members loud and clear that wages are just not enough with the rate of inflation and cost of living. We know that there are many in this bargaining unit that need and deserve to make a living wage.

Our committee knows that the current wage offer presented by the employers is just not enough and that the employers and government need to do better. The bargaining committee has presented the employer with a fair wage package that will benefit the membership, and it is critical that employers respect that position. The committee will not present a package back to our members that we do not feel is respectful or adequate.

If Premier Houston really wants to fix healthcare, we say, "Pay these workers a fair and decent wage and respect them like you say you do."

The Health Support Bargaining Committee is comprised of over three thousand members represented by Unifor, CUPE and NSGEU from all areas of the province. They work in classifications such as maintenance, power engineering, plumbers, electricians, laundry, food services, and environmental services.

The members of this bargaining unit kept patients and staff fed and facilities operational, so hospitals could remain open and cleaned and sterilized all through the pandemic to keep everyone safe. They were crucial in helping to stop the spread of COVID in hospitals and other facilities during the worst times of the pandemic. They worked tirelessly to ensure the health and safety of the most vulnerable and sick patients was protected within the hospitals of Nova Scotia including the IWK Children's Hospital. Some of these classifications have numerous unfilled vacancies for which it's hard to recruit new applicants because of the low salaries, and lack of permanent employment, that left our members working long hours with few days off during the worst of the pandemic.

Our committee does have another date scheduled for conciliation on July 28. We remain committed to fighting to get our members the best possible agreement that we can. Please be sure to keep informed and reach out if you have any questions. You will receive an update after our July 28 meeting on what our next steps will be.