

Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union

SGEU

## Saskatchewan Cancer Agency Bargaining Update

September 15, 2011

**On August 25, 2011, after 21 months without a contract, your negotiating committee presented management and SAHO (the negotiating team for the Cancer Agency) with an offer that provided fairness to all parties involved and assurances to our cancer patients and their families. At that time, we were informed by the employer's negotiating committee that they would have to take our proposal back to their principals (government).**

In our offer:

- We changed our monetary proposal to 11% over 5 years, 3 months. We requested a five-year contract to ensure a more secure environment within the agency for some time and to avoid going back to bargaining in just one year. We requested:
  - January 1, 2010      1.5% economic increase
  - January 1, 2011      2.0% economic increase
  - January 1, 2012      2.0% economic increase
  - January 1, 2013      .5% economic increase
  - April 1, 2013        2.5% economic increase
  - April 1, 2014        2.5% economic increase
- We proposed maternity leave top up as per the SUN and Health Sciences agreements.
- We proposed that pension contributions increase by 0.25% for both the employer and employee effective the date of signing, with an additional 0.25% contributed by the employee and employer on April 1, 2013.
- We are in agreement with the employer's proposed salary adjustments. This includes the Letter of Understanding (LOU) regarding nursing, as proposed by SAHO. (However, the employer is offering no retroactivity).
- We proposed full retroactivity on all economic increases and market supplements/adjustments.

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- We proposed increasing the market adjustment for mammography technician to match the specialty rates in Saskatchewan.
- We proposed to **permanently** give up our right to strike by naming ourselves 100% essential in exchange for the ability to send any future impasses in bargaining to interest-based arbitration. Interest-based arbitration is a process that occurs when bargaining comes to an impasse. The parties jointly agree to take any outstanding disputes to a third party for adjudication. This process is timely and fair. This proposal is intended to protect our members and our patients from job action and long delays in bargaining. Labour relations problems make it difficult to recruit experienced staff. We are already seeing the effects of this situation in our workplace.
- The employer has made it clear that an agreement will not be reached unless hours of operation are increased to include weekends. Therefore, we proposed language that would ensure that only work directly related to patient treatment would occur on weekends. We also proposed shift premiums equivalent to those in SUN's agreement. We indicated the need to review and negotiate collective agreement provisions that alter language involving days of rest, overtime, EDOs, scheduling, etc. that may be affected by this Letter of Understanding prior to finalizing the Memorandum of Agreement.
- The employer requested two weeks to take our proposal back to their principals (government), so they could review it. As a sign of good faith we stopped our ban on voluntary overtime, so important time sensitive projects could resume.

**On September 13, 2011, the employer responded to our offer with a counter offer and an ultimatum from the Saskatchewan government that we had to accept the entire proposal as offered by September 15 at 3:00 p.m. or parts of the offer (as indicated by underling) would be taken off of the table. Your negotiating committee is disappointed by this tactic.**

In the offer made by the employer:

- Monetary compensation totals 8% over 4 years, 3 months.
  - January 1, 2010 - 1.5 % economic increase
  - January 1, 2011 - 2.0% economic increase
  - January 1, 2012 - 2.0% economic increase
  - January 1, 2013 - .5% economic increase
  - April 1, 2013 - 2.0% economic increase
- The employer proposed shift premiums as per Health Sciences which are significantly lower than SUN.
- The employer proposed a pension increase of 0.25% effective March 31, 2013.

- The employer offered to increase the market adjustment for mammography technicians to match specialty rates.
- The employer proposed retroactivity for economic increases but not on market supplements/adjustments.
- The employer proposed language that would allowed them to schedule **any** employee for work on weekends from 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. without negotiating with the union. This language gives no assurances that you will be rotated through weekend shifts on an equitable basis, that your EDO will occur adjacent to your days of rest, that your days of rest would be two consecutive days in a row, etc.
- The employer indicated that our proposal of being designated 100% essential in exchange for interest-based arbitration in the future was “not acceptable at this time.” This leads us to believe that the government would rather see cancer agency employees on strike than save the people of Saskatchewan the distress of prolonged labour disputes and job action now and in the future.

Your negotiating committee is presently working to respond to the employer’s proposal in an attempt to reach an agreement.

Please note that this summary is an extract of the highlights from this round of bargaining and some items may have been omitted.

Finally, we will be meeting with stewards on September 29, so please provide any feedback to your steward before that date.

In Solidarity,

Trent Edwards	Co-Chair
Kevin Lobzun	Co-Chair
Pat Danyluk	Negotiating Committee Member
Kevin Garratt	Negotiating Committee Member
Genny Marshall	Negotiating Committee Member
Kenton Emery	SGEU Staff Representative