

SGEU's position on strike vote

August 6, 2026

Dear Members,

We know many of you have heard talk about strike votes by Health Provider Unions (HPU) and may be wondering why SGEU is not calling a strike vote at this time. We wish to clearly outline our position and reasons behind it.

SGEU is committed to negotiating the best possible deal for you. Right now, the committee is still at the bargaining table with the employer, exchanging proposals and looking for solutions. As long as talks are active and there is still room for movement, it is in members' interests that we exhaust every opportunity to reach a fair deal through negotiations.

Why other unions are talking about strikes

We understand there is confusion because other Health Provider Unions (HPUs) are talking about strike votes. However, none of the HPUs are actually in a position to strike right now, because there is no Essential Services Agreement (ESA) in place for any of them. Without an ESA, no union can legally move to job action. At this point, we believe your time and energy are better spent supporting a strong bargaining effort. We do not want to ask members to vote for a strike only to sit and wait while the legal preconditions for job action are still being worked out.

What a strike vote and ESA really mean

A strike vote is a formal vote where union members decide whether to give their leadership the authority to call a strike if necessary. A successful strike vote does not automatically trigger a strike; it simply gives the union a mandate to use strike action as a tool if all other options fail. Before any strike can legally begin, we must negotiate and finalize an ESA with the employer. An ESA is a legal agreement that sets out which services must continue during a strike to protect public health, safety, and welfare. It determines who must keep working, what level of service must be maintained, and how essential and non essential roles are treated.

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SGEU remains committed to negotiating an ESA with the employer. While our current focus is on reaching a negotiated settlement, establishing an ESA is an important part of ensuring members are prepared and protected in future rounds of bargaining, even if it is not ultimately needed during this round.

We are not backing down

We respect the legal framework for job action and are focusing our time and energy on negotiating a fair agreement that delivers real gains for members. Current signals from the employer suggest they are more motivated to reach an agreement, in part because they are under pressure from their own principals. That motivation strengthens our bargaining position and reinforces our view that our efforts are best spent at the table.

We will continue to keep you informed as bargaining progresses, and if the situation changes, you will hear directly from us about next steps, including any move toward job action.

In solidarity,

Your negotiating committee:

Sharri Laczko, Bargaining Chair

Jackie McChesney, Bargaining Vice-Chair

Joe Leger

Jolean Brochu

Anne Basaraba-Pedersen

Eric Davis, SGEU Labour Relations Officer