

## **Tentative agreement features loss of vacation day**

CUPE is recommending that BC's Health Science Professionals reject a new Collective Agreement that features the rolling back of vacation entitlements and red-circling of a significant number of positions.

The proposed two year agreement features no general wage increase, no new money for benefits, and no major improvements to member's rights.

Instead, your Collective Agreement was "mined." This means that existing benefits that have been hard fought for in the past were traded off for new benefits.

For example, to pay for new benefit improvements, members with more than five years of service will lose one vacation day permanently and a number of CUPE members will have their positions red-circled and new employees hired into those positions will be paid at a lower rate.

"This deal gives Health Science Professionals trades hard-earned time off in the form of vacation entitlements and wages for employees working without general supervision for benefit improvements, which are nice, but represent a net loss for our members," says CUPE's Health Care Presidents Council chair, Frank De Waard.

CUPE's Bargaining Committee is recommending rejection.

Here is a quick outline of the changes found in the new tentative agreement:

### **Wage Adjustments**

There are no general wage increases for this two year contract.

### **Benefit Improvements**

The following benefit improvements were negotiated:

- Vision care increased from \$200 to \$350
- Removal of dual dental restriction
- Psychologist services added up to \$900 per year
- Podiatrist services increased from \$200 to \$400 per year
- Added coverage for oral and injectable contraceptives
- New enhanced disability management program, though it will be mandatory
- Creation of a \$450,000 Professional Development Fund for HSPBA members

## **Benefit Reductions**

This agreement features the reductions of the following benefits, which were used to fund benefit improvements and other cost items:

- **Vacation Leave Reduction** – Effective July 1, 2010, vacation accrual is frozen for all regular employees and after July 1, 2011, it will take six years to begin accumulating vacation leave over 20 days and vacation entitlements for all employees over five years of service is reduced by 1 day.
- **Maximum Special Leave Credits** – The maximum will be reduced from 180 hours per employee to 144 hours.
- **Definition of General Supervision Suspended** – The definition of “General Supervision” will be suspended for the term of the agreement, which affects all employees classified into Grade II positions as a result of working without general supervision. Those employees will be red-circled (their wage will be frozen) so long as they remain in those positions, but any new employees hired into those positions will be hired at a Grade I level.
- **Requirement for Chiefs Suspended** – The requirement for a chief in each department is suspended and instead the most senior ranked paramedical within the department, as determined by the employer will be classified in accordance with the classification system.

## **Committees/Working Groups**

A number of committees and working groups were set up to deal with important issues that could be resolved at the bargaining table. These include:

- **Joint Strategic Partnership Committee** - A new committee has been established to focus on initiatives identified by health science professionals as improving productivity, safety and service delivery in the health care system.
- **Joint Classification Committee** – A joint committee will be set up to develop a new classification system that creates administrative and procedural efficiencies, defines the full scope working level professional, develops appropriate criteria that recognizes both the clinical and administrative/supervisory work and supports flexibility in the design of jobs.
- **Joint Benefits Working Group** – A joint working group will be set up to review the benefit plans and identify areas where we can improve the benefits and reduce the growth of benefit costs.
- **Insufficient Off Duty Hours Working Group** – A joint working group will review practices and provide recommendations regarding initiatives that will reduce the need for overtime and call back.

## Other Changes

A number of other changes were negotiated to the Collective Agreement:

- Employers will make a reasonable effort to provide stewards with space to secure their union materials.
- Stewards are now explicitly allowed to conduct votes during work time.
- Employees seconded to management positions or other bargaining units continue to accumulate seniority and service for a period of two years.
- Employees approved for leaves of absence to pursue advanced education will also continue to accumulate seniority for the term of their leave, up to two years.
- Special Leave language for caring for family members with serious illness language was clarified
- Reduced term of disciplinary documents remaining on employee's file to 18 months, but added that extended absences other than maternity leave or vacation will be discounted from this term
- Established Health Authority wide seniority lists to enable posting and bumping rights throughout the Health Authority, which will improve job security and adds priority access for laid off employees to vacancies

Please see the attached Tentative Agreement for a complete listing of the proposed changes and the attached meeting notice for the ratification meeting date, time and location for your local.