

CUPE COMMUNIQUE

Canadian Union of Public Employees **CUPE.ca**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Release: Government of Saskatchewan walks away from a deal with CUPE Local 600

Moose Jaw: Talks between the Government of Saskatchewan and the union representing social services workers have come to a halt after the Employer walked away from the table.

CUPE Local 600 represents 380 members who work directly for the Community Living Service Delivery (CLSD) branch of the Ministry of Social Services and Ministry of Central Services.

“The Government of Saskatchewan has stated repeatedly that they want Saskatchewan to be the best place to live for persons with disabilities. But the lack of respect for front line workers is shocking,” said Nancy Seman, president of the CUPE Local 600. “We are urging the Government to take bargaining seriously and work with us to find a solution to address the health and safety issues we are facing.”

Recent changes to how the provincial government provides services for people living with intellectual disabilities is putting more pressure on workers, and contributing to the labour unrest. Work life balance and burn out are a significant issue for members across the province.

The local also reached out to Tammy Kirkland, Deputy Minister of Social Services with the intent of presenting her information on the current burnout problem in the workplace and the rationale for our solution. Our efforts were met with little success as she has refused to meet with the Union.

It was the Local who initiated the return to the bargaining table on January 20 and 21.

“The Government of Saskatchewan is not taking our health and safety concerns seriously. They are refusing to consider changes to the schedule model that is pushing our members in crisis and planned respite homes towards burnout,” said Seman. “And now they have dug their heels in with an insulting wage offer – less than what other unions received and less than what out-of-scope managers received.”

“It seems clear that the Government of Saskatchewan is taking our members for granted,” added Seman.

The local is not yet in a legal strike position but is close to an Essential Service Agreement with the employer.

“We will continue to try to reach a deal at the bargaining table, but we are exploring all additional avenues we have at our disposal, up to and including job action.”

CUPE Local 600 members provide support to Saskatchewan’s most vulnerable people with intellectual disabilities and help them access a variety of community-based services. We have members across the province who work as social workers, behaviour therapists, occupation therapists, recreation therapists, case managers, outreach workers, tradespeople, crisis support specialists, community residential workers and group activities aides. We work in Saskatoon, Prince Albert, North Battleford, Melfort, Yorkton, Moose Jaw, Swift Current, Estevan, Weyburn, Regina, Lloydminster and La Ronge.

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