

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT DECEMBER 2018 – MARCH 2019

Sisters, Brothers and Friends:

As always, I began the new year meeting with staff across the country. This was an opportunity to discuss our priorities for 2019 and the challenges we are facing, as a union and as a movement, in the year ahead.

We discussed the challenges our members and locals are encountering in the face of government austerity agendas, and public sector funding cuts. We talked about CUPE's bargaining policy, and the impact it is having on employers, big and small. And we talked about something you will be hearing more about from me this year – the question of union membership, and the difference between being a worker who pays union dues and enjoys the protection of a collective agreement, and a member-in-good-standing who enjoys the right to full participation in our union.

I always appreciate the opportunity to engage with staff on these and other conversations about our collective efforts and common goals. Their dedication to and support for our members and our union is key to the work that lies ahead.

Legislative Update

The spring session of Parliament will be the last before the country heads into a federal election in the fall, and the House of Commons has only 50 days remaining to accomplish their work.

The Liberal government will deliver the 2019 federal budget on March 19, 2019, which is expected to set the tone for the election.

Also setting the tone for the election is the resignation of two prominent cabinet ministers, who lost confidence in their government over improper pressure placed on the then-Attorney General related to criminal charges facing SNC-Lavalin.

MARK HANCOCK
National President/Président national

CHARLES FLEURY
National Secretary-Treasurer/Secrétaire-trésorier national

DENIS BOLDUC, FRED HAHN, JUDY HENLEY, DANIEL LÉGÈRE, MARLE ROBERTS
General Vice-Presidents/Vice-présidences générales

On February 28, along with CUPE 1556 member Tanya Williams, I joined NDP MP Don Davies on Parliament Hill as he introduced legislation that takes aim at the growing issue of violence against health care workers. Bill C-434 would amend the criminal code to require courts to consider assault in the health care sector as an aggravating factor in sentencing, and is intended to increase pressure on employers to treat workplace violence with the gravity it deserves.

It seems the Liberals haven't learned the lessons that sent them to third party status in 2011 – they still have an inherent sense of entitlement, and a habit of putting the priorities of their wealthy and influential corporate friends first. Despite promising Canadians that they had changed, and that they were different from Stephen Harper's Conservatives, they have left a trail of broken promises; electoral reform, establishing a nation-to-nation relationship with Canada's Indigenous peoples, and respecting the role of labour in the economy.

In the coming weeks we expect this government to fail to deliver on a universal pharmacare program, to implement measures that will undermine defined benefit pension plans, and to further promote privatization of public infrastructure. These are not the actions of a government that deserves our support.

The good news is that, on February 25, NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh was elected as MP for Burnaby South and will join his caucus in Parliament this month. Of course, this would have happened months ago if Prime Minister Trudeau had not played cynical political games and delayed calling by-elections. It was an honour for me to spend some time on the campaign with my friend Jagmeet. He has a special ability to connect with people in a way I have not seen in many politicians, and having a seat in the House of Commons will ensure more Canadians get to know him.

CUPE is working on a robust plan to support Jagmeet and his team of NDP candidates in the federal election, which will be held October 21, 2019.

Canadian Labour Congress

In February, more than 40 CUPE members and staff from across the country participated in the CLC's annual lobby day on Parliament Hill. Along with 350 workers from other CLC affiliates, these members met with Members of Parliament to express support for a national, universal Pharmacare program, and discuss retirement security and pensions. In total, over 192 meetings were held in one day.

The CLC's governing body, the Canadian Council, will be meeting in Winnipeg this May. Part of those meetings will include celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Winnipeg General Strike, one of the most influential labour events of the 20th century. The Council will also view a screening of a new movie about the general strike, *Stand*, based on a musical play.

Unifor remains outside of the CLC, and it appears they are continuing their raiding activities at hotels in the Toronto area. Their absence continues to have an impact on federations of labour and labour councils, and CUPE’s participation in these bodies is perhaps more important than ever. I am proud of CUPE members and locals who have stepped up to fill the void, and encourage more locals to do so.

Collective Bargaining/Strikes/Lockouts

There was one dispute involving job action during the reporting period, that was resolved.

PROVINCE	LOCAL	EMPLOYER	# OF MEMBERS	STRIKE BEGAN	DURATION (days)
British Columbia	15	Vancouver Art Gallery	123	February 5, 2019	7

CUPE 15 – Vancouver Art Gallery – British Columbia

Workers walked off the job on February 5 over wages and gallery managers’ attempts to eliminate long-standing scheduling rights. Through mediation, the parties were able to reach a four-year agreement that excluded the gallery’s one remaining proposed concession on scheduling, provides retroactive wage increases of 1.5 percent in each of 2017 and 2018, and includes future wage adjustments of 1.75 percent in 2019 and 2.0 percent in 2020. The cumulative effect of these wage increases will see gallery workers’ paycheques increase by 4.75 percent in 2019, and a further 2 percent next year.

Bargaining was frustratingly slow in that it had taken a year and a half to get to monetary proposals. The employer had twelve concessions on the table in a year that ended with a \$1.4 million surplus. The employer was seeking more managerial rights be put directly into the collective agreement, limiting the union’s right to grieve. The union worked hard at the bargaining table to find solutions to the employer’s concerns presented at the table, many of which are due to poor management and planning.

The bargaining committee had a strategic plan in place, mobilized members and reached out for community support. Congratulations to the committee for their foresight, and to the members who held firm in their resolve to achieve a collective agreement that met their needs without concessions.

Non Strike/Lockout Bargaining

CUPE 391 – Sechelt Public Library Association – British Columbia

Workers at Sechelt Public Library are celebrating the ratification of their new collective agreement. The union was able to reach a positive agreement that addresses key issues for precarious workers. The addition of sick leave for casual workers, a right that should be universal for all workers, will make a huge difference for these members and their families.

Other key elements of the settlement include increases to daily guaranteed hours, a Job Evaluation Plan with associated special wage adjustments, a plan to collaborate on a new Violence in the Workplace Policy, and new language to support paid special leave for all employees. The new agreement will span four years and features a total cumulative wage increase of 8.7 percent.

CUPE 9 – Palliser Regional Library Workers – Saskatchewan

Members of CUPE 9 have approved a new three-year contract. The new contract will see all classifications receive a 40 cent per hour raise in each of the three years (2018, 2019, and 2020). In agreeing to the pay increases, both sides felt that any wage increases should be based on an hourly rate.

Workplace safety measures were also improved for these members, most of whom are women who work alone in rural libraries or in large urban libraries with very few staff. Domestic violence provisions were also negotiated, which will ensure members seeking to escape a violent relationship will have access to support.

The final longstanding issue that was resolved relates to seniority and scheduling. Many library members work part-time, and often must work more than one job to make ends meet. New language ensures longer service workers access to additional shifts, without always having to compete with newer staff who have more availability.

Bargaining Policy

These are just a few settlements of many where locals and staff have embraced and implemented the use of the *National Executive Board Policy on Collective Bargaining: Resisting Concessions and Two-Tier Proposals*.

The policy requires that locals develop strategic plans before bargaining that will guide them through the bargaining process. The policy also requires locals to seek improvements for precarious workers and protection for members from violence in their workplace, at all bargaining tables.

Early in each calendar year, Brother Charles and I meet with staff in their respective regions across the country. Their feedback on the bargaining policy has been positive. Staff have told us that employers are aware of the policy, and that our locals have been able to use the policy to move employers off concessionary bargaining.

To further support CUPE's bargaining policy, we are developing an online resource for staff and locals, which will be available in the very near future.

Regional Services Division Updates

ATLANTIC

Nova Scotia

CUPE Nova Scotia and CUPE 8920, representing acute care members, have launched a campaign in partnership with CUPE National to stop the closure of hospitals in Cape Breton and to continue to oppose the centralization of the health care system. The campaign will help communities regain their voice and control of health care services in their region. CUPE had predicted that the creation of the Health Care Authority would create uncertainty and chaos, provide no savings and would not improve the quality of services. The facts are now proving that CUPE was right.

The Nova Scotia Long Term Care Coordinating Committee completed provincial bargaining on behalf of the 49 CUPE nursing homes in the province. It was a long and difficult round of bargaining, made even more difficult by budget cuts. The McNeill government must now focus on staffing levels. CUPE members are over worked, work related injuries are up, and staff can't keep pace. Many of our members tell us that, on average, they have less than ten minutes to get each resident ready for the day. The government must immediately increase funding to long term care facilities, so they reach a minimum staff funding of 4.1 hours of care per resident each day. There needs to be accountability to ensure new funding is directly applied to care, as well as standardized calculation and reporting of staffing levels. The government must also standardize violence prevention and health and safety programs, including training across employers. CUPE Nova Scotia is also calling on the provincial government to provide better financial support for continuing care assistant program students, in order to address recruitment issues.

CUPE 281 members working for the Town of Trenton ratified a tentative agreement in October of 2018. However, the deal was negotiated by the town's former chief administrative officer and, at the December town council meeting, councillors refused to ratify the agreement. In hopes of finalizing the agreement, the union requested the assistance of a conciliator, but the council still has not ratified the tentative agreement. The local was forced to take a strike vote on February 6. Members gave their bargaining committee a strong strike mandate.

Newfoundland and Labrador

On February 6, CUPE NL joined students from across the province in a day of action to call on the Ball government to fund the future of post-secondary education. Funding to the College of the North Atlantic and Memorial University must be restored, the needs-based program reinstated, and tuition fees must be reduced to ensure an equal access to post-secondary education for all.

CUPE 3336 members are entering bargaining with a campaign for fair living wages, and to put an end to precarious work. These 220 members employed at The Works Recreation Complex at Memorial University want to make the employer aware of CUPE's bargaining policy. They expect this round of bargaining to be long and frustrating, but they will not accept concessions and are determined to improve working conditions for precarious workers.

In the provincial public sector, all CUPE locals in Newfoundland and Labrador have ratified their agreements, which include the master bargaining agreement.

MARITIMES

Prince Edward Island

In February, PEI health sector locals 805, 1051, 1778, and 1779 secured wage increases of 5.25% over three years through interest arbitration, which is better than what other unions were able to achieve.

CUPE PEI, the PEI Federation of Labour, and the PEI Coalition for Equal and Fair EI are holding public meetings to pressure the federal government to resolve issues related to employment insurance zones issues on the island that make it more difficult for residents of Charlottetown to access employment insurance benefits. Activists are gearing up for a fight in the lead up to the federal election.

New Brunswick

In New Brunswick, phase 2 of the *Breaking the Mandate - Bargaining Forward* campaign is in full swing. Major province-wide strikes and rotating strikes are on the horizon. The New Brunswick Council of Nursing Home Unions (NBCNHU), which represents 4,000 workers in 45 nursing homes facilities, held a strike vote at the beginning of March and is getting ready to lead the movement.

Provincial bargaining for over 25,000 CUPE members is stalled as government negotiators refuse to bargain before the provincial budget is adopted. But the New Brunswick government signaled that public consultation will not be needed to prepare this year's provincial budget. While the business community has been shown the red carpet by Fredericton, the public's only way to provide input on the coming budget will be through online submissions. To date, the NB government has scheduled seven closed-door meetings with stakeholders and ministers. CUPE NB denounced the government for not allowing the public and community groups to attend these meetings. If government truly wants to know how to improve services in NB, they should talk to the front-line workers who actually do the work and the citizens who depend on those public services. In any event, CUPE locals and CUPE New Brunswick are mobilized and ready to break the mandate that will come out of this conservative budget.

The People's Alliance privatization agenda is getting more and more evident as weeks go by. Their most recent call has been for the privatization of NB Liquor and Cannabis NB. The PANB is pushing the Alberta model, which has left Albertans worse off after two decades of privatization, because they are paying higher prices at private liquor stores while at the same time, the government is receiving less tax revenue. This has also hurt local brewers and distillers who now have difficulty getting shelf space versus global giants. In a nutshell, the PANB proposes to hurt small businesses, raise the costs for ordinary purchasers and reduce government revenues for New Brunswick, just so the bigger corporate players can make more profit.

In the municipal sector, CUPE 188 members at the Town of Dalhousie ratified a five-year collective agreement with wage increases of 3% in the first year and 2% for the next four years.

Quebec

Grappling with an intransigent employer, 1,100 longshoremen at the Port of Montreal, members of CUPE 375, voted 99.5% in favour of going out on strike. However, the employer decided to attack their right to strike by asking the Canada Industrial Relations Board to declare that 100% of the work performed by the longshoremen be deemed as essential services. The employer's attorney, an outgoing federal Liberal MP, is employing a plethora of tactics to slow down hearings and to delay the longshoremen's right to strike.

Meanwhile, the news is far more encouraging in CUPE 3783, which represents the employees of the GSK pharmaceutical corporation in Quebec City. They recently ratified the agreement reached with the Union, after 55 bargaining sessions. In addition to salary increases of 2% per year, the agreement calls for the introduction of a member-funded pension plan (MFPP) with employer contributions amounting to 6%, as of 2022. A new job evaluation plan and a new salary structure were also negotiated. Finally, substantial improvements were made to the situation of precarious employees as the Union bargained a provision requiring the employer to pay the entire cost of insurance during layoffs of the local's seasonal members.

The SCFP-Québec communications sector has welcomed a new group into its ranks when the Bell Media production and technical service employees recently chose to join us.

This sector has been very busy with the ongoing review of the *Broadcasting Act*. The Provincial Communications Sector Council (CPSC) submitted a brief in which they argued that the principles of continuity and equity should guide the review panel in their consideration of the legislative and regulatory measures necessary to adapt to today's new technology environment. The review panel should not lose sight of the important social and political goals pertaining to identity and sovereignty that are an integral part of the *Broadcasting Act*, as well as the *Telecommunications Act*. The new legislation should enable Canadians to make the most of the contemporary communications economy, notably with regard to employment, while still continuing to enrich Canada's social fabric.

Quebec's education sector is currently in "vigilance" mode, ever since the CAQ government's announcements concerning their sector. A brief was presented by SCFP-Québec to Quebec's Public Finance Commission on February 5, which denounced the introduction of a single school taxation rate. The brief argued that this measure is in no way equitable or just, much to the contrary. Although the new government has affirmed that they're seeking to correct an injustice, we think that they're more concerned about creating the illusion that they're reducing the fiscal burden of Quebecers, while at the same time undertaking to compensate the school boards' revenue shortfall by dipping into the Quebec government's Consolidated Fund. CUPE's locals clearly understand that this bill will greatly reduce the funding of Quebec's school boards, which will translate into a reduction of services and budget cutbacks.

In the university sector, CUPE 4574 concluded a collective agreement at the "École nationale d'administration publique". The contract will run from 2016 to 2020, with a new salary structure that will come into effect retroactively to June 2016. This represents an 8.2% increase in the total payroll. In addition, there will be the public sector salary increase, as well as a lump sum payment of \$275. Premiums have likewise been improved. Finally, to tackle job insecurity and precarious work, a minimum staffing level was negotiated and the definition of temporary personnel was tightened to be more restrictive.

Ontario

Premier Doug Ford has established a clear pattern in Ontario: declare a crisis, then cut services. Ontario's PC government has promised \$7 billion in tax cuts and the elimination of the \$15 billion deficit, all while also foregoing cap and trade revenue designed to reduce greenhouse gases. The only way to accomplish this is through unprecedented budget cuts.

Every day, new bits of information are discovered or leaked. But we still don't have a full picture of the government's plans, as most details are being held under lock and key to avoid public scrutiny. We do know that the Ontario government is preparing a massive overhaul of the health care system that will lead to further privatization. Instead of ending hallway medicine Ford is creating more havoc in health care. On any given day in Ontario, 1,000 citizens are lined up in hallways or other non-traditional treatment locations awaiting hospital beds.

The Ford government plans to privatize health care inspections, laboratories, licensing, devices, Ornge Air Ambulance, and more. They have proposed the elimination of LHINS and the creation of a "Super Agency" that will oversee a privatization drive through "myCARE" groups empowered to contract out front-line health care to for-profit entities.

They have also announced unprecedented cuts to Ontario universities, the conversion of student grants to loans, and an attack on student democracy on campuses – attempting to cover their attack on students with a paper-thin discount on tuition that will cost students more in the long run.

The tuition discount will mean funding cuts to universities of at least 4%, rising to as much as 10%. Meanwhile, student debt is expected to grow, and the conversion of OSAP grants to loans will hurt students, particularly those from low-income families.

Education Minister Lisa Thompson announced another government consultation to review "class size options" – likely code for removing caps on class sizes in the K-12 sector, reduced inclusion for children with exceptionalities, crowded, unmanageable classrooms, fewer teachers and educational assistants, and fewer classroom supports for students.

Ontario schools are already funded by an outdated, inadequate formula. There is a \$15 billion repair backlog for schools; boards spend more money on special education than they receive in government funding; and students face long wait lists for educational assistants, speech language pathologists, and support from other professionals.

In addition to the government's review of class sizes, the government is considering the merger of school boards in Ontario's public system to streamline administration and cut board bureaucracy. The change is expected to take aim at school boards in smaller communities.

Ford's interference in the collective bargaining process truly reflects his government's disdain for labour rights. His first piece of legislation after taking office was to order the members of CUPE 3903 back to work from a legal strike. In December, he ordered members from CUPE 1000 at Ontario Power Generation back to work before they even set up a picket line.

The list goes on. The government has created a false crisis by giving tax cuts to the rich and corporations. And the result is that they have thrown the public sector into disarray.

Working people in Ontario, including CUPE members, are part of a growing movement across the province fighting to defend and expand the public services we depend on and prevent the chaos of privatization, contracting-out, and cuts.

On March 25, the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) is hosting a province-wide conference that will bring together labour leaders, activists and community allies to build our base and develop a strategy to fight back. This one-day conference will roll-out the OFL's full campaign plan designed to activate the "Power of Many". It will feature engaging speakers and the launch of new organizing and educational tools.

The Take Back Ontario Conference will deliver:

- A commitment for escalating actions in April 2019, in collaboration with the Ontario Health Coalition – to coincide with the tabling of the Ontario budget. (We expect the PC's first budget to include further attacks on unions, on vulnerable Ontarians, cuts to public services, the privatization of health care, and other significant attacks on social services and supports.)
- Formal plans for another escalating mass action on June 7, to mark the one-year anniversary of Ontario's disastrous decline since the election of the Ford government, in collaboration with our partners.

I encourage all CUPE locals in Ontario to participate in this one-day conference.

Manitoba

Our members, and all health care workers in the province, have been in limbo for two years, waiting for the government to finally hold representation votes that were first announced in the spring of 2017. In the meantime, the government has added pressure to the workplace with funding cuts, closures, and the reorganization of health care services.

These workers will finally be participating in representation votes later this spring. In total, there will be 42 separate votes held, with six regions and seven classifications (nurses, physicians, medical residents, physician assistants, professional/technical, facility support, community support). CUPE is involved in virtually all votes including those with doctors and nurses as we represent small numbers of these workers in community health clinics.

The Pallister government continues to promote privatization of public services through Social Impact Bonds (SIBs) in the community social services sector. We continue to work with allies in the community (like the Child Care Coalition of Manitoba and Communities Not Cuts) to oppose SIBs and to fight back against government funding cuts in the sector.

The government also appears ready to throw our education system into the same kind of chaos they have created in health care. They have initiated a province-wide review, which could result in the elimination or amalgamation of school boards.

Saskatchewan

Talks between CUPE 1975 and the University of Saskatchewan have broken off after the employer tabled a 3-year wage freeze and a proposal to eliminate our defined benefit pension plan and replace it with something inferior. The local has advised the provincial mediator, conciliation has ended, and strike preparation has begun.

In the meantime, the local is calling for a meeting with the university's Board of Governors in the hopes that they will be willing to get involved and help resolve the looming dispute.

After almost two years of bargaining, in the midst of major reorganization of the health care system and the looming threat of representation votes, CUPE 5430 finally reached a tentative agreement with the employer last week. The bargaining committee is currently presenting the five-year deal to its 13,000 members across the province.

Restructuring of the new Saskatchewan Health Authority continues to disrupt our workplaces, and brings with it the threat of increased contracting out. Our members remain steadfast in taking on their employer when it comes to chronic understaffing and workload problems, workplace violence, and respect.

A report on security services in health care has now been released. It contains 28 recommendations which include a long-term goal of centralization of security services in the province. We believe this may eventually lead to privatization.

The government has now put out Requests for Expression of Interest (REOI) to provide long term care services to replace the long term care facility in Grenfell, along with Pioneer Village in Regina. This follows on the heels of the closure of the existing facilities, which were deemed uninhabitable due to mold. CUPE held a very successful town hall meeting in the community to discuss the impacts of the closure, and will be working with community members to pressure the provincial government for public long term care facilities in Grenfell.

Workload concerns and violent incidents are on the rise in public schools, and the Education Workers Steering committee is conducting a survey on violence in the workplace to get a better picture of the scope and breadth of the problem. The results will be circulated amongst all education locals.

Alberta

A recent bulletin by Alberta Treasury Branch economist Todd Hirsch noted that if Alberta were a country, its economy would be the 9th highest in the world on a per capita basis. And despite recent struggles in the energy sector, Alberta led the provinces in economic growth in 2017 and 2018, and is expected to lead for the next two years as well.

A provincial election must be held between March 1 and May 31 of this year. Recent public opinion polling shows an increase in Premier Rachel Notley's personal popularity, although the NDP still lags behind. There is so much riding on this looming election. United Conservative Party leader Jason Kenney has, at different times, promised spending cuts of 20%, back to 2015 levels, or a spending freeze. Even a freeze will have a negative impact on public services and our members. We look to the political situation in Ontario and know we cannot go down that road.

CUPE Alberta is executing its political action plan and we continue to do what we can to convince our members to support the re-election of the Notley government.

In the meantime, bargaining continues to be slow in all sectors, with the rebound in the economy being too recent to affect the employers' proposals. Our locals continue to resist concessions, and focus on bargaining improvements to both wages and contract language.

British Columbia

The third NDP provincial budget, introduced in February, continues the shift toward making life more affordable for working people, and building a fairer, more sustainable economy that works for everyone.

The budget provides a historic revenue-sharing agreement between the province and BC's First Nations. This a giant step towards true reconciliation.

Interest being removed from student loans is great news for students, their families and the economy. CUPE K-12 education workers will benefit from a \$73 million commitment over three years to cover the Employers Health Tax for school districts.

Funding for more affordable housing and support to eradicate child poverty shows how essential it is to elect progressive governments. This 2019 budget truly benefits working people.

CUPE BC and the British Columbia Library Association (BCLA) are partnering to ensure that the BC Summer Reading Club (SRC) continues to award medals to children across the province who participate in this successful, inclusive, and much-loved program. CUPE BC is generously contributing \$50,000.

The Summer Reading Club encourages and fosters learning and a lifelong love of reading. Public libraries have always been important hubs for communities, and provide important services to all visitors. In 2018 over 85,000 children registered in BC SRC and over 163,000 children participated in programs, community events, First Nations events, literacy groups, and in-house library programs under the BC SRC banner. Work done by library staff across the province ensures that BC SRC responds to the unique needs of diverse communities. This “ground-level” approach makes BC SRC a responsive, community-driven and library-designed program.

This year will be busy in British Columbia for activists and staff as they gear up for bargaining in several sectors.

K-12 locals are preparing strategic plans, educating their bargaining committees and finalizing their proposals for local bargaining, following the provincial agreement reached last year. Three locals are currently at the table where two employers are tabling concessions – limitations on union leave and changes to vacation approvals. Bargaining committees continue to push back on these concessions.

The Colleges and Institutes Support Staff Bargaining Association, consisting of four CUPE locals and seven BCGEU locals, continues to meet to develop proposals for the common table. Fewer colleges will participate on the employer’s side than have before. In some cases, locals and their employers will bargain on their own and not be bound by agreements reached at the common table. Those locals not bound by the common table are committed to a coordinated approach.

Hospital Employees’ Union (HEU)

Nearly 44,000 health care workers represented by the multi-union Facilities Bargaining Association (FBA), led by CUPE’s Hospital Employees’ Union, have a new collective agreement that includes important job security, health and safety, and compensation improvements.

Union members voted 89 percent in favour of ratifying the three-year deal reached with B.C.’s public health employers last December. The agreement tackles health and safety issues, and restores contracting-out protections stripped by the former B.C. Liberal government in 2002. After 16 years of privatization and unstable workplaces, we have an opportunity to strengthen services to the public by improving working and caring conditions of our members.

The new contract includes general wage increases of six percent, in line with the government’s current negotiating mandate for the public sector. In addition, entry level wages will be raised by phasing out lower steps in the wage grid. Several shift premiums have also been improved.

This agreement will re-establish a provincial organization focusing on occupational health and safety in health care – a sector with among the highest rates of injuries in B.C. The provincial government will provide \$8.5 million over three years to support this objective.

The agreement runs from April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2022 and covers a broad range of workers in hospitals, long term care, corporate offices, supply warehouses and health clinics. They work in hundreds of job classifications in direct patient and resident care, as well as in support services, technical, clerical, and trades and maintenance areas. HEU represents more than 90 percent of workers covered by the agreement. The ten-union FBA also includes members from the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union and the International Union of Operating Engineers.

The NDP government's reinvestment in better care for seniors, faster access to surgeries, and building and renovating hospitals continues to be a priority in the 2019 provincial budget. Health care programs will see a lift of \$1.3 billion over three years, which will include support for a multi-year plan to boost staffing levels in nursing homes to the minimum guidelines established but unmet by the former Liberal government.

The budget backstops an ambitious plan by the Health Minister to provide patients with faster access to surgeries and diagnostic procedures through a program of new innovations and strategic investments announced last March. Budget 2019 continues support for the second year of a \$548 million investment in seniors' care including more staff for long term care, home support and other services.

The capital plan anticipates several hospital renovations announced over the last year that will enhance and improve services in communities across B.C. And significantly, health authorities won't be forced to use inflexible and expensive public-private partnership (P3) schemes favoured by the former BC Liberal government. Those long-term liabilities amount to almost \$1 billion in health care alone.

Budget 2019 includes a number of health initiatives that will make life more affordable for British Columbians including eliminating Medical Services Plan premiums on January 1, 2020 and reducing or eliminating Pharmacare deductibles for 240,000 families.

Airlines

CUPE 4060, representing flight attendants at Flair Airlines, negotiated a first collective agreement for its members. Facing an anti-union employer who resorted to unfair labour practices during bargaining, the local had to fight back against a two-tier wage proposal and other concessions. With a strike mandate, the local was able to achieve improvements in many areas such as increases in per diems and premiums, an equitable wage grid with rapid increments, a guaranteed cost of living adjustment based on CPI and a pension plan for all members with at least one year of service.

The Air Canada Component of CUPE held elections at the beginning of the year. I offer my congratulations to the new component executive and look forward to working with them.

At the beginning of January, arbitrator Kaplan issued an award where the Air Canada Component of CUPE was largely successful in its policy grievances against the On Board Service Manager program introduced by Air Canada two years ago. This program led to the abuse of management rights and interfered with union representation. The employer will have to take steps to reform the program to ensure compliance with the arbitrator's award.

Organizing Report

For the period of December 1, 2018 to February 28, 2019 CUPE welcomed 773 new members in 13 newly-certified bargaining units. Staff and member organizers organized 337 members in health care, 235 members in municipalities, 98 members in universities, 79 members in social services, 22 members in the unassigned sector and two members in K- 12.

Currently there are 25 new campaigns underway that if successful would increase our membership by 6,590. There are 12 files for certification at Labour Boards that would bring in 791 new members. Four restructuring projects have the potential to increase membership by approximately 28,600 members and protect tens of thousands of existing CUPE members.

Organizing activities across the country are as diverse as our membership. In New Brunswick and Quebec we continue to pursue new members in the cannabis industry. In New Brunswick we have been using a hotline, web page and town hall meetings to pursue opportunities. While in Quebec we are awaiting an important decision from the Labour Board with respect to an appropriate bargaining configuration. We have four applications before the Quebec Board all equally important as 2019 will see the addition of 16 new cannabis retail locations.

In the Atlantic region, a recent Labour Board decision allows for the inclusion of casual employees into collective bargaining and as a result, staff are following up on these leads. In Ontario the focus is on wall-to-wall organizing and representation votes. Ontario organizers are leading a unique project in Kingston for home care workers which is community-based.

Manitoba is focused on the upcoming health care representation votes. In Saskatchewan, although there were no imminent plans for province-wide representation votes, Health Authority officials have hinted that applications for Information Technology Services and Laboratory Services may be broader than originally anticipated.

Legislative changes in Alberta have generated increased interest from unorganized workers. Organizers are focusing on wall-to-wall organizing. In British Columbia we are anticipating Labour Code changes that will impact our ability to organize. Efforts are currently focused on varying existing certificates.

In Memoriam/Personal

Messages of Condolences

I offer my sincere condolences to the families of the following CUPE members and retirees who have passed away or lost a loved one in the reporting period.

Members

- Jane Louise Baker Member of Local 3550
Alberta
- Robert Wolfe Member of Local 4155
Ontario
- Jocelyne Chery Member of Local 3691
Ontario
- John Cronkhite Retired Member of Local 1096
New Brunswick
- Katherine Barnes Member of Local 3550
Alberta

Retired Staff

- Howard Matthews Servicing Representative
Lakehead Area Office
- Jean-Pierre Cabana Legal and Legislative Representative
Quebec Regional Office

Friend of CUPE

- Art Kube Retired President
British Columbia Federation of Labour

In Closing

On behalf of your National Executive Board, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the work you do, day in and day out, on behalf of our 680,000 CUPE members. And to thank you for the work I know you will take on as we turn our attention to the federal election being held Monday, October 21.

In writing these reports every few months, I am always struck by how much of a difference a worker-friendly government can make for our members, their families, and their communities. The challenges we face from Saskatchewan east are in stark contrast to the progress we are making under NDP governments in BC and Alberta.

We have the opportunity this fall to make a difference at the federal level. We have seen how the Trudeau Liberals have failed to deliver for our families and Indigenous peoples, and we know that an Andrew Scheer government will never support working people. There is a growing opportunity to elect Jagmeet Singh and a strong team of NDP MPs in October. And I know I can count on you to make sure we make the most of that opportunity.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MH' followed by a stylized flourish.

MARK HANCOCK
National President

:tp/ceu