



Members confirm shared benefit costs a non-starter

March 13, 2012

HSA members have reconfirmed that concessions on extended and dental benefits are not negotiable.

After learning that government appears to be set to propose to save money by getting health care workers to pay for some of their health and dental benefits, HSA conducted an informal telephone survey of members on the weekend to alert members to this pending proposal, and to get preliminary feedback from members.

-We've had strong indications that the government and employers will be targeting benefits, and we felt it was important that all HSA members be alerted to that agenda," HSA President Reid Johnson said.

The phone survey was not a scientific survey, but a very direct way to let HSA members know the governments intentions at the bargaining table. HSA members have been adamant about protecting 100 per cent employer-paid benefits and, as the informal survey showed, members still feel strongly that benefits must be protected. In the informal survey, more than 80 per cent of members who responded said they do not favour paying a portion of benefit costs. Feedback by phone and email to HSA has also been very strong in opposition to the scheme.

-The message is clear. No concessions. Your bargaining committee will continue to take that position in negotiations. HSA members have made it clear they will fight this agenda," bargaining committee chair Val Avery said.

HSA members will have an opportunity to be educated about the details of proposals when negotiations are completed. All members will have an opportunity to vote on the terms and conditions of a proposed contract.

Alternatively, if the bargaining committee and union board of directors recommend job action if negotiations are not fruitful, all members will have an opportunity to vote whether or not to back demands with job action.

The parties are set to return to the bargaining table March 27.

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