

BULLETIN

# Meaningful consultation is key in any workplace restructuring

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With all of the workplace restructuring that has occurred in healthcare and social services, HSA members are frequently called upon to participate in employer-driven "consultation" processes. The processes are characterized as an opportunity for health care and social services workers to have input into restructuring initiatives and provide feedback with respect to the operational impact.

While HSA welcomes any opportunities for employee input (after all, it is guaranteed in our collective agreements), we must ensure that this kind of consultation is meaningful. In other words, we must ensure that employers do not simply "go through the motions" or co-opt HSA members into initiatives that will be destructive for the system and its employees. Whether it is program management or contract reform, HSA members know all too well that ill-conceived restructuring efforts can have dire consequences for the system and those who deliver the services.

For this reason, HSA has developed a document entitled *Policy Guidelines for HSAs Participation in Workplace Restructuring Programs* (reproduced below). This document clearly lays out the conditions under which HSA will participate in task forces, focus groups or any other mechanism designed for employee consultation. The primary purpose of these guidelines is to protect the integrity of our collective agreement within the context of consultative processes. However, I believe in the long run, they will also discourage employers from hastily embarking on restructuring initiatives without appropriate consideration of the impact on workers, patients and clients.

As part of our commitment to good public policy and planning, HSA is also working with the [Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives](#) (CCPA) to analyze the impact of various restructuring initiatives on public services and employees. Through a labour-sponsored research desk, we hope to gather data that we can use to inform the public about the value of public services and the dangers of a "quick fix."

Over the next few months, we will update you on the work of the CCPA's Public Interest Research Desk. In the meantime, members who have questions about the *Policy Guidelines for HSAs Participation in Workplace Restructuring Programs* should contact their chief steward.

## **Policy guidelines for HSA's participation in workplace restructuring programs**

HSA will participate in processes regarding workplace changes (i.e. PFC, program management, and amalgamations) in accordance with the following guidelines and principles:

### ***Objectives***

#### Protect the integrity of the Collective Agreement

Â· To protect the role of the chief paramedical, especially staff supervision, teaching and evaluation

Â· To protect classifications and positions

#### Protect the integrity of professional disciplines

Â· To maintain profession-specific job descriptions

Â· To protect the standards of practice for all HSA disciplines

Â· To prevent crosstraining/multiskilling of HSA jobs

Â· To ensure members of professional disciplines are clinically supervised by practitioners of the same profession

#### Ensure the continuation of quality patient care and safety

### ***Guidelines and principles***

Â· To have HSA members involved in planning process

Â· That HSA representation is sanctioned by HSA

Â· To meet on employers time

Â· To ensure access to information for informed participation

Â· To have adequate preparation and analysis before implementation of any model

Â· To reach decisions by consensus

Â· To include analysis of impact on workload

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