



BULLETIN

## **Job action: How will it affect you?**

December 1, 2012

### **The Report: December 2012 vol.33 num.4**

IN AN IDEAL WORLD, STRIKES WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY.

Employees and employers would meet at the bargaining table, discuss bargaining proposals based upon reason, justice and mutual respect. They would use objective data and negotiate a settlement. In reality, that is often what happens. However, sometimes there are significantly different points of view about what is -reasonable," -just" and -objective." When that happens, settlements depend on strength and determination.

#### **PROTECTING OUR PATIENTS**

In order to accommodate the essential nature of our work, HSA members must adapt the use of strike action. Health care workers cannot conduct an -all out" strike whereby all members withdraw their services. Instead, HSA members are compelled to have a -controlled" strike during which essential services are provided at all times.

#### **THE DUTY TO PARTICIPATE**

No one -wants" to strike. But HSA members have taken job action in the past to assert fairness and respect for the value of our work. We take job action when withdrawing our services is the only power left to us to support our bargaining demands.

For job action to be effective, all of us must remember that we are the union. The union is not just the HSA Board of Directors or staff ... it is each and every member.

#### **A DEMOCRATIC CHOICE**

Prior to the start of any type of job action that involves the withdrawal of services, the union conducts a strike vote.

A strong, positive vote by the membership is crucial to demonstrate our commitment to our bargaining proposals. It is also a tremendous opportunity for members to show their commitment to fairness and justice.

#### **DIFFERENT KINDS OF JOB ACTION**

Job action can take many forms. It could start with the refusal to perform specific duties and escalate to an all-out withdrawal of everything but essential services.

#### **PARTIAL WITHDRAWAL OF SERVICE/WORK TO RULE**

Refusal of duties can exert considerable pressure on management if done with broad support from the membership and other unions. An example of this type of job action would be a refusal to do any duties that are not specifically part of your job description, like portering or clerical duties or paperwork. A ban on

overtime can also be effective.

## **INTERMITTENT WITHDRAWAL OF SERVICES/ROTATING JOB ACTION**

In this type of job action, members withdraw their services for short periods of time. An example of rotating job action is to withdraw services in one department one day, and then withdraw services in a different department the next day (while the first department goes back to work).

## **TARGETED JOB ACTION**

Targeted job action involves the withdrawal of service at specific work sites.

## **ESCALATING JOB ACTION**

Escalating job action starts in one facility or one department and escalates as additional facilities or departments are added over time.

### **A LITTLE HISTORY**

**1971** ... -No strike" clause included in first HSA constitution.

**1975** ... After negotiations had continued for six months without even a wage offer from the employer, HSA members vote to remove the -no-strike" clause. Within two weeks the employer presents an offer.

**1987** ... HSA fought Bill 19, the anti-labour legislation ushered in by the newly elected provincial government under Premier Bill Vander Zalm. HSA members around the province participated in a oneday walkout. The NDP later repeals the legislation.

**1999** ... On International Womens Day, community social services workers go on strike. Eleven weeks later they achieve an historic agreement to achieve parity over time with community health care workers.

#### **2001**

March 15 - Unions representing health services and support workers reach a tentative agreement with health employers which ends wage discrimination against 15,000 community-based health care workers.

April 9 - After a 95 per cent vote in favour of job action, nurses begin an overtime ban.

April 20 ... HSPBA announce 90 per cent strike vote

May 22 - HSA paramedical professional members begin what will eventually become illegal job action.

June 19 - HSA health science members are ordered back to work by provincial legislation which imposes a -cooling off" period.

July 23 to 24 - HSA members withdraw services province-wide in defiance of the legislation.

August 7 - The provincial government imposes the paramedical professional and nurses collective agreements by legislation ... it is the employers final offer.

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