

BULLETIN

Breaking the impasse

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AFTER NINE MONTHS OF HARD BARGAINING, WE HAVE REACHED AN IMPASSE. LET ME TELL YOU HOW WE GOT HERE.

You have given the bargaining committee a clear mandate: restore competitive wages, protect benefits and protect working conditions, including dealing with workload and call issues. We have spent nine months trying to kick start negotiations and make inroads on these issues.

But HEABC insists there will be no deal without concessions.

We say: absolutely not.

They tried it with community health workers. They said no. They tried it with facilities workers. They said no, and voted 96% for a strike to back it up.

But they finally got concessions with the Nurses Bargaining Association ... 0% and 3% wage increases over two years in exchange for concessions on benefits. Nurses gave up sick bank payout for new hires and returned to Pharmacare tie-in, which makes it harder and potentially more expensive to get the medication you might already be taking.

Now, with the nurses agreement in their back pocket, they are hoping to force concessions on all health care workers.

We have fought this all the way.

HSA has made proposals on the issues that matter to our members: on-call and call back to fix the problem of insufficient off-duty hours, classification improvements and benefits.

But weve had no response, except in classifications. HSA proposed a system that respects the complex nature of our members work, and responds to ever-increasing scopes of responsibility that come with health care restructuring.

HEABC countered with a proposal to get rid of the system and replace it with a job profile classification plan that paves the way for flat organization models at any given worksite ... ignoring the increasing complexity and demands on a multi-disciplinary health care team.

Your bargaining team tabled a framework agreement for wage increases of 2% and 2% for 2012 and 2013 ... the increases that can be had under current controls. And they refused to respond.

Now you have voted overwhelmingly in favour of a strike to back our efforts. Its the mandate we need to break the impasse and make the progress we need to protect the health care system and the people who make it work every day.

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