

# memorandum

TO: Chief Stewards - HSA  
FROM: Kathy McLennan, Membership Services Coordinator  
DATE: June 12, 2012  
SUBJECT: Classification Grievances – Application of Social Worker or Social Program Officer Classification

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HSA is pleased to announce that we have reached a without prejudice agreement designed to resolve over 135 grievances. The settlement agreement also provides a continuing, consistent approach to classifying jobs that provide a counselling, education, prevention, referral or advocacy service.

## Background

Over the past several years, HSA has objected to a certain category of job descriptions submitted by HEABC. Over 135 disputes were filed concerning job descriptions that had titles using words such as Counsellor, Case Manager, Program Manager, Crisis Worker, Crisis Intervention Clinician, Therapist, Client Care Coordinator, Prevention Worker, Clinical Coordinator, Mental Health Clinician, Mental Health Therapist, Mental Health Worker, Mental Health and Addictions Clinician, Outreach Worker, Intake Therapist, Addictions Counsellor, Community Education, Educator, Care Coordinator, Team Leader, Hospital Liaison, and Clinician (and others).

The job descriptions contained qualifications such as Master's degree in Social Work, Counselling Psychology, Education; degree from a university program in Social Work, Psychology or Sociology; Master's degree in an applicable social or health sciences program such as Counselling Psychology; Bachelor's degree in a relevant allied health discipline; Master's degree in an Allied Health Discipline; and Masters in Counselling, Adult Education, Social Work or related discipline (and others).

HSA asserted that the work described by the job descriptions was work typically performed by Social Workers and should therefore be classified in accordance with the Social Worker job family. HEABC had inconsistently classified the job descriptions under individual memoranda or miscellaneous rates or Social Program Officer, rather than within the Social Worker job family.

HEABC asserted that the Social Worker job family includes only social work jobs for which the employer specifically requires a degree in Social Work and/or eligibility for registration with BCCSW as a qualification.

## The Settlement Agreement's Importance

HSA expects that job descriptions that specifically require a degree in Social Work and/or eligibility for registration with BCCSW will be classified in accordance with the Social Worker job family.

Typical of the Social Program Officer classification will be those positions “where the qualifications are not exclusive to any one discipline and where the position provides a counselling, education, prevention, referral or advocacy service to individuals, families or groups with mental health, behavioural, addiction or chronic medical concerns”.

The Social Program Officer (SPO) hierarchy appears in the Provincial Agreement under the Industry-Wide Miscellaneous Rates, starting at page 80.

The parties have begun a process that will include applying the appropriate SPO classification to certain disputed positions, with maximum retroactive adjustment back to April 1, 2010. Although the salary structure for many positions will remain at grid level 8 or 11 with the application of the SPO classification, there are supervisory positions that will be entitled to a higher salary structure according to the number of Health Science Professional FTEs they supervise.

HSA is sharing with HEABC the information it has gathered pertaining to these disputed positions. In due course, HSA will make every effort to inform incumbents, of those positions reclassified to a higher salary structure, about their entitlement to retroactive monies.

The second phase of the parties' work is to identify, prior to December 31, 2012, any non-disputed and established positions for which the SPO hierarchy should apply. After HSA notifies HEABC of the positions we have identified from our own database, a bulletin will be issued asking members who believe the SPO hierarchy should apply to their position to identify themselves and provide a copy of their job description to HSA. The information gathered will be presented to HEABC prior to December 31st. May 15, 2012 will be the effective date for any resulting upward reclassification agreements. Wage protection has been negotiated for any member whose position is identified for a lower salary structure.

Increment adjustments from the initial salary structure to a higher salary structure will be made on a step-to-same-step basis.

Please direct any questions concerning this matter to HSA's Classification Department, using the address [classifications@hsabc.org](mailto:classifications@hsabc.org)