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PLEASE POST – BL10106

DATE April 11, 2006

Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association – frequently asked questions about the new collective agreement

With the Health Science Professionals Collective Agreement now ratified, members can expect to see the provisions of the collective agreement to begin to take effect immediately. The following frequently asked questions are being distributed to members in response to numerous enquiries about key issues contained in the agreement.

For information about issues not covered in this bulletin, contact your steward.

Signing Bonus

Who is eligible for the signing bonus payment?

All regular and casual employees employed by a health sector employer covered by the Paramedical Professional Collective Agreement as of March 31, 2006.

How will the signing bonus money be paid out?

The lump sum amount is to be pro-rated based on straight-time hours paid as a proportion of 1879.2 hours between the first pay period prior to April 1, 2005 and the first pay period prior to March 31st 2006.

Will the calculation of signing bonus money include paid days off such as sick leave, compassionate leave, special leave, vacation, days off in lieu of statutory holidays and union leave?

Yes, the calculation of the signing bonus money is based on straight time hours paid.



bulletin

When will the signing bonus be paid out?

The Employer has agreed to pay all regular employees within the first three pay periods after March 31 2006.

Will anything be deducted from the payment?

The Employer will be making the normal mandatory statutory deductions such as income tax and employment insurance etc. However, union dues will not be deducted from the signing bonus payment.

I was on maternity (parental) leave during the last year. Do I qualify for the signing bonus money?

Yes, employees on a leave of absence under article 18 (Maternity and Parental Leave) will receive the signing bonus money based on their full time equivalent position as of the last day worked prior to the leave of absence as long as they were still an employee on March 31, 2006.

I am on a leave of absence under Article 19.14 (Leave – Workers’ Compensation). Will I get the signing bonus money?

Yes, employees on leave under Article 19.14 will receive the signing bonus money based on their full time equivalent position as of the last day worked before their leave of absence.

I am presently receiving maternity or parental benefits from E.I. Will E.I. reduce my E.I. entitlement as a result of this payment?

Employees in receipt of E.I. have an obligation to report the payment to E.I. The branch of the federal government responsible for E.I., Services Canada has advised, based on its review of the collective agreement language regarding the signing bonus, “there should be no impact as to EI entitlement for an individual on Maternity or Parental Leave”.

You may have heard some media reports concerning the possible pay back to E.I. from public sector workers on maternity or parental leave. The situation in other bargaining units with different collective agreement language differs from your situation.

I am on Long Term Disability. Will I get the signing bonus money?

Employees on Long Term Disability will get the signing bonus money based on their full time equivalent position as of the last day worked prior to the leave.



bulletin

I transferred to a different hospital during the year. Will I still receive the entire bonus amount?

As long as you stayed with the same employer (health authority or affiliate) you will receive the entire amount. However, if you transferred to another employer you will only receive a pro-rated amount based on the time with your current employer.

I resigned my position in the middle of March and am now working for an employer outside the health sector. Will I still qualify for some signing bonus money?

No, to qualify for the signing bonus money you need to be employed as of March 31, 2006.

Extended Health Care Benefits

When does my BlueNet card expire?

Pacific Blue Cross will cancel BlueNet (pay direct prescription drug card) effective April 12, 2006.

I have high prescription costs, is there any provision to help me deal with prescription expenses since I have to pay up front and wait for reimbursement?

Employees who have large EHC costs and who, because of financial hardship, require pre-arrangement to have those eligible expenses billed directly, can contact Pacific Blue Cross's call centre for information on its standard Assignment of Payment process and, on request, an application form will be sent to you.

When does the annual deductible rate for extended health benefits change?

The deductible rate changes effective April 12, 2006. The new deductible will be applied to claims received on or after April 12, 2006. If a person has already satisfied their \$25 deductible to date in 2006, the difference of \$75 will be applied against any claims received from April 12 to December 31, 2006.