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November 21, 2022

Dear Members;

**Re: Member Bargaining Update**

Thursday, November 18, marked another four days that your Negotiations Committee has spent at the table with the Health Employer's Association of BC (HEABC). Despite 17 days of bargaining and many more non-joint caucus days, we can only describe our progress as slow and frustrating. We have tried to collaborate with "solution-based bargaining," and we can only describe HEABC as taking the approach of "positional bargaining," which is an approach that never works. It is clear that HEABC and their committee of BCEHS representatives are not taking the dire urgency seriously and making bargaining a priority, nor are they aligned with the Minister of Health's direction that the BCEHS need to focus on two specific goals: Provide timely and exceptional service to British Columbian's when and where they need ambulance services and; Be an outstanding employer in supporting the wellness of calltakers, dispatch, and paramedic staff

As reported previously, the Union submitted a comprehensive package at the outset of bargaining that meaningfully addressed our key issues and priorities, BCEHS strategic plan direction, and commitments made from the Minister of Health. We came to the bargaining table very prepared, with our proposals annotated, well researched and supported. Something that cannot be said of HEABC.

To date, we have not seen any significant engagement to our proposals or reasonable submissions from the Employer on crucial issues such as wages & benefits, staffing, the elimination of SOC and the On-Call model, service delivery, mental health and wellness, and front-line supervision.

Regrettably, we have received a few proposals that call for significant concessions to our Collective Agreement to assist the Employer in fixing the staffing crisis that they created. They are negotiating in a blind panic to remove the rights of our CA under the guise of needing to fill vacant positions. The Employer's package is reactionary and will remove substantive long-established rights and stability from our members.

We are far apart and have been very clear- our members will no longer stand by and see the demise of our service and profession. We will not negotiate or entertain any ill-conceived trials or reconfigured, failed solutions that cannot be successful when they refuse to implement the systems to support them.

There is clearly a disconnect between the Employer's bargaining agent and the reality of our service. Our team reminds them each day how many ambulances are parked without paramedics as we sit at the table. HEABC and the Employer are bargaining for band-aids while we are bargaining for foundational change and a sustained future of paramedic services in this province. Our approach, package and proposals are designed to bolster short-term and long-term solutions, and we will not be persuaded by cheap, short-term fixes. Each day your Union has been applying pressure on both the HEABC, the Employer's representatives and the Government to come back with meaningful responses as soon as possible.

At the close of this past week of bargaining during the joint caucus, your negotiating team asked HEABC when they would be able to provide a comprehensive response to our entire proposal package. The

employer's lead at the bargaining table advised us yesterday that after convening discussions with all involved stakeholders, they have determined that, barring any unforeseen obstacles, they would provide the Union with a comprehensive response on or after November 30, 2022. They stated the timeline was to enable their team to complete all outstanding costing estimates and obtain pending approvals; as a result, they requested we stand down the joint caucus until that date. In light of this, we will be reconvening face to face bargaining on December 5-9.

Notwithstanding all the foregoing, I want to thank our Bargaining Committee, Executive and all those supporting them for their patience, professionalism, and leadership as they stay the course. They are more focused than ever, even under these trying times. They are doing a fantastic job, and I have the utmost confidence they will be successful.

I want to pass along this message and commitment from the bargaining committee to our members – “We are committed to the process, our members, and patients. We will keep you apprised and informed of developments at the table. We commit to only bringing a package that will be the absolute best deal that is possible for our members. Despite the frustration, we still believe that at the end of this process, we will have a tentative agreement representing our members' needs. We will exercise all our rights to get to this point. All avenues will be exhausted.”

Please ensure you have logged into our new website and registered your current information. Follow our social media and newsletter so we can keep you updated on current matters and bargaining.

Be safe and well.

On behalf of your Negotiating Committee and Executive Board,



Troy Clifford  
President  
Ambulance Paramedics of BC  
CUPE Local 873

TC/sd/MoveUp

