

ALBERTA UNION OF PROVINCIAL EMPLOYEES

BARGAINING UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES (AHS)

LOCALS: 041, 043, 044, 045 & 046

NURSING CARE

BARGAINING CONTINUES WITH A FOCUS ON JOB SECURITY, PENSIONS, AND VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

As mentioned in our last update, your Alberta Health Services (AHS) Nursing Care negotiating team met on Sept. 20th and 21st, and again on Sept. 27th.

Ernst and Young Report

We spent a considerable amount of time talking about job security in the context of the Ernst and Young report and the resulting projected loss of positions identified in AHS's Implementation Plan.

While the AHS plan mentions the potential for increased demand for highly trained healthcare workers, it is not clear to your negotiating team that the Employer has any concrete plans to address this inevitable workforce shortage given they don't appear to have any concrete plans to address the current workforce shortage crisis. You know that you've been working short for some time before the COVID-19 pandemic hit; these last eighteen months have only shone a light on that.

We also talked about how the Employer is going to address the impact that implementation of their mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy is going to place on the already strained pool of available healthcare workers. The Employer offered to bring in members of their recruitment and talent department to discuss the work they are doing on recruitment and retention at a future bargaining date.

The Employer also committed to updating your negotiating team about the current status of implementing the Ernst and Young Report recommendations, which called for cuts of between \$851M - \$1,199M per year once fully implemented across both AHS

and Covenant Health. Those savings cannot be realized without significant job loss or wage rollbacks, which were recently taken off the table by the Employer.

Local Authorities Pension Plan

The government's recent history of interfering with public sector pension plans while simultaneously gambling on bad bets has got the attention of your bargaining committee. We had discussions around your Local Authorities Pension Plan and introduced language to protect your future. You've worked hard for those pensions – which are really just deferred wages – and we are committed to ensuring this government cannot abscond with your funds to make another absurd investment in a dying resource.

Health and Safety – Violence in the Workplace

At our meeting on Sept. 27th, we spent the day talking about health and safety, with a focus on violence in the workplace.

As reported by the Standing Committee on Health of the House of Commons in 2019, health care workers experience a rate of workplace violence that is four times higher than any other profession. The Committee noted that most of the violence experienced by health care workers goes unreported due to a culture of acceptance.

Your negotiating team pointed to the failings of AHS's current reporting system and provided concrete examples of issues you have brought to our attention. Addressing current levels of workplace violence is a priority, but even more important is

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stemming the tide of projected increases in violence directed towards healthcare workers. Your negotiating team will continue pushing this issue and working toward greater protection and support for you. You shouldn't have to accept being faced with violence in the workplace and, if you do, should be able to count on your Employer to support you, not fight you every step of the way.

Remember that your collective agreement remains in full force and effect as negotiations continue. If you have any questions about your collective agreement or are experiencing an issue at work, please contact your worksite Union Steward or reach out to the Members Resource Centre at 1-800-232-7284 and they will put you in touch with your Members Services Officer who will assist you.

If you have questions about this bargaining update, please contact a member of your negotiating team.

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