

ALBERTA UNION OF PROVINCIAL EMPLOYEES

BARGAINING UPDATE

ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES (AHS)

LOCALS: 041, 043, 044, 045 & 046

NURSING CARE

OCTOBER 25, 2021

BARGAINING CONTINUES WITH A FOCUS ON HEALTH, SAFETY, RESPECT AND PROPER STAFFING

On Oct. 19 & 20 your negotiating team returned to the table and covered some very important non-monetary topics with the employer, not the least of which is Respect in the Workplace.

Violence in the workplace is a big problem in health care, and workers like you bear the brunt every day, all while trying to provide the best care possible to patients. Your negotiating team has been diligent in finding solutions to this problem, and during our meetings we shared some of our research with the employer, including a Report of the Standing Committee on Health that features powerful testimonials from experts. We encourage all of you to look at the full report and read some of the excerpts at the bottom of this update.

Vacancies and staying vigilant

Last week we also discussed vacancies with the employer. Many of us are working short-staffed, and even though Alberta Health Services has developed a new recruiting process to fill vacancies, they haven't been keeping AUPE in the loop — at least, not to the degree they should be. Your negotiating team needs to know what's happening in areas where vacancies aren't getting filled, and we want to understand how this fast-tracked hiring process works, so we can defend against any potential privatization ploys.

Back in September, the employer used contract agencies to address RN shortages. They're also threatening our fellow members in general support services (GSS) with privatization, so we know that AHS is capable of contracting out our work. We want to get ahead of them, especially if they use short staffing as an excuse to privatize. The AHS recruitment specialist has agreed to meet with us on Nov.6, when we will hopefully get more answers and insight.

If you have any thoughts on these matters or have questions, please reach out to us (contacts below). We plan to meet with the employer on Nov. 3 and to keep improving the language and protections in our collective agreement, one step at a time.

Excerpts from "VIOLENCE FACING HEALTH CARE WORKERS IN CANADA" report:

"Health care employers consider violence an occupational health and safety issue, but it needs to be considered a care issue. There is absolutely no hope for quality of care without considering worker safety. Having safe health care workers means better care."

Henrietta Van hulle
Public Services Health and Safety Association

"Beyond the numbers, there is the human toll. There is the care aid who is sexually assaulted by a home care client with dementia. There is the nurse who is punched in the jaw by a senior suffering from delirium. There is the personal support worker who doesn't know how she could possibly face going back to work. Finally, there is the senior whose care is impacted because the person they rely on, the person they have developed a relationship with, is no longer available to help because of workplace injury."

Ms. Jennifer Lyle
Liaison, National Alliance for Safety and Health in Healthcare,
and Canadian Association for Long Term Care

(Contact information on page 2)



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