

# BARGAINING UPDATE

## ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES (AHS)

LOCALS: 041, 043, 044, 045 & 046

### NURSING CARE

NOVEMBER 8, 2021

## WE'RE MAKING PROGRESS AT THE BARGAINING TABLE AS NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUE

Your negotiating team met with the Employer for two days last week (Nov. 3 and 4) where we continued to focus on your health and safety, particularly as it relates to working alone and violence in the workplace. After meaningful discussion from both sides, we signed off on Article 6 – Respectful Workplace and Article 35 – Health and Safety.

As we reported in our last bargaining update, your negotiating team is concerned that workplace violence has become all but normalized and we are committed to fixing this problem with prevention and reporting processes. After hearing examples of members being deterred and even shamed when they've reported violent incidents, the Employer heard your concerns.

The language we have agreed to for **Article 35.03 - Workplace Violence Prevention** is as follows:

- (a) The Employer shall maintain policies, procedures and resources [future hyperlink] with the objective of addressing and ensuring a safe and respectful workplace free of violence.
- (b) For all incidents of workplace violence from a patient, resident, or member of the public, the Employee must:
  - i. report the incident immediately to the manager/medical leader or supervisor; and
  - ii. document the incident, as soon as possible, through the appropriate Employer reporting process [future hyperlink].
- (c) The Employer shall:
  - i. ensure that the Employee is provided with the necessary time to document the incident in the Employer reporting process;

- ii. investigate the incident in accordance with the Employer policy; and
- iii. inform Employees affected by the incident of the investigation's findings including cause(s) and areas for corrective action if required (subject to applicable privacy legislation/obligations).

We recognize and emphasize to the Employer that there are cultural changes over and above the language in the CBA needed to address this serious matter, but we believe this language is a good first step.

The second major change in Article 35 we signed off is the addition of language surrounding working alone.

### **35.04 Working Alone**

- (a) Where an Employee is assigned to work alone, the Employer shall have in place a policy and procedure to support a Working Alone Plan. Employees shall be provided with and required to use the hazard controls specified within the applicable Working Alone Plan.

We also spent some time on **Article 11 – Appointments, Transfers and Vacancies**. One of the Employer's major priorities is to introduce a "consequential amendment" process that would allow for a sort of back-filling of vacancies without posting to fill vacancies that occur as a result of a posting. In this scenario, the vacancy created by a successful candidate leaving their original position could be filled by the Employer from within the candidate pool, in order of seniority, from the originally posted position.

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This would significantly reduce the number of jobs the Employer would be required to post and could speed up the recruitment process.

We continue to assess the Employer's proposal which we think might resolve recruitment issues in particular, specialized units while failing to address the overall staffing challenges facing the entire system. While it is important to provide mechanisms for concerns that might arise among sections of trees, neither party can afford to ignore the fact the problems we face are forest wide.

Discourse at the bargaining table continues to be respectful with both parties seeking constructive solutions to the challenges our public health-care system, and those of you who keep it working, face.

Upcoming bargaining sessions are scheduled for Nov. 24 and 26 and Dec. 15.

Your current collective agreement remains in full force and effect. If you have any questions about your collective agreement or are experiencing any issues at work, please contact your worksite steward. You can also contact your Membership Services Officer (MSO) by calling AUPE at 1-800-232-7284.

We know that many of you have carried a lot over these past several months. Remember that you have support available to you and your family 24 hours a day, seven days a week if you need it. Free, confidential help is available for AUPE members and their immediate family members (spouses and children).

Call **AUPE's Crisis Support Service line at 1-844-744-7026**. This service is available even if the crisis is not work-related.

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

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