

# BARGAINING UPDATE



## AHS General Support Services

AUPE Locals 054, 056, 057, 058, 095 and Lamont Health Care Centre GSS

## AHS tables insulting proposals; bargaining telephone town halls coming

Your AUPE Bargaining Committee resumed bargaining with AHS on March 24 and 25. During these meetings, AHS tabled an outrageous and offensive package of proposals.

Because their proposals were submitted as a full package, your bargaining committee would be forced to accept the entire package, not just the proposals we felt would be acceptable to you.

As a result, your Bargaining Committee could not accept this package and will keep fighting for the respect and dignity you deserve. The rest of this update will go over the key problems with AHS's proposals.

### Zero wage increases over 4 years in exchange for "employment security"

AHS is proposing General Support Services members take four years of zero per cent wage increases—that's 0% for 2020, 0% for 2021, 0% for 2022, and 0% for 2023—in exchange for "employment security." Demanding we take zeroes is a slap in the face to every GSS member who helped keep this healthcare system afloat throughout the pandemic.

AHS proposes zeroes for you, but they have already reached settlements with other groups that include significant increases. The United Nurses of Alberta and our fellow AUPE members in Nursing Care received a 4.25% raise on the wage

scale (over 4 years), plus 1% COVID pay to thank them for their efforts during the pandemic.

AUPE Nursing Care members also received a new long service increase of 2% once they reach twenty years of employment, and the United Nurses received an additional 2% by converting their annual lump-sum into money on the wage scale.

AHS may think we should take 0% wage increases in exchange for "employment security," but the cost of living is rising higher than we've seen in decades and money on the wage scales is more important than ever.

General Support Services workers are among the lowest paid at AHS. There are members who have worked at their jobs for dozens of years who are still not making \$20 an hour.

Does AHS know that some of us are using the food bank? That some of us can't afford to fill up our gas tanks to get to work? Does AHS really think GSS members can afford to take zeroes? That's insulting.

Even if proposing zeroes was not insulting, the job security AHS is offering is not worth the trade.

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## What does “employment security” really mean?

The so-called “employment security” AHS is offering is not real job security. AHS’s offer gives them the ability to eliminate your job, but they will keep you “whole” for the term of the collective agreement. Keeping you “whole” means if they cut your job, AHS will find alternative work for you in whatever job they have available, in whatever schedule they need you to work, in whichever location they need you to work in.

The only commitment to you is ensuring you take home the same amount of money as you do in your current job. This also means that if AHS puts you in a job which pays less than your current job, you will have to work more hours to make the same amount of money to be kept “whole”. This is not true job security, and it is not what you told us you need us to fight for.

As we’ve reported previously, AHS has identified the following areas for contracting out. This is why we are fighting so hard for real job security, not AHS’s proposed “employment security.”

- Inpatient food
- Environmental services
- Linen (already contracted out)
- Lab work
- Contracting, procurement, and supply management
- Long-term care

If there is one takeaway from this, it is that no GSS member is safe from losing their job, and accepting AHS’s proposal would not keep us safe.

## The rest of AHS’s proposals

AHS is still proposing rollbacks for many Articles. However, AHS has backed down from some of the rollbacks they have proposed... and are trying to spin that as good news. Going back to what is in our

old agreement would be neither a gain nor a loss in most cases, but your Negotiating Team is fighting for better.

Below is a summary of key proposals remaining that must be dealt with:

AHS has withdrawn several of their absurd monetary rollbacks. They would now prefer not to change the following articles:

- Article 20: Hours of Work
- Article 22: Overtime
- Article 26: Shift and Weekend Differential
- Article 27: Named Holidays

Remember, keeping the current agreement language means not achieving any gains in these Articles. No rollbacks is better than nothing, but we cannot allow ourselves to think “nothing” is an achievement.

But there are, of course, rollbacks that are still on the table. AHS says their rollbacks would save them \$27.5 million off the backs of General Support Services members. These rollbacks include:

- Red-circling wages in certain circumstances following a layoff or after being reclassified to a lower position.
- Only being paid your straight time wage to attend Occupational Health Safety meetings in circumstances when you should be getting Overtime.
- Preventing temporary employees from ensuring they have another temporary position to go to before the expiry of their current temporary position. At the same time, AHS would ask us to extend the length of temporary positions to 24 months even when the funding is not external to the employer. Temporary employees do not have job security and are deprived of a Flexible Spending Account, and this would make their situation worse.

Finally, your bargaining committee made the following proposals. AHS did not even bother to respond—they simply ignored these proposals:

- Article 32: Leave of Absence
  - Improvements to Bereavement Leave, Personal Leave, and addition of Donor Leave.
- New Articles on Professional Development and payment of Professional Fees.
- Letter of Understanding on much needed improvements to your Extended Health Benefits.

## Bargaining Telephone Town Halls coming

Your committee and AUPE resource staff are organizing Telephone Town Halls for you to attend on April 6, 7, and 8. Each town hall will run from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. for you to ask your questions about bargaining and AHS’s insulting proposals.

Make sure we can reach you on your phone for the town halls. Please update AUPE with your most recent contact information by visiting [aupe.org/update-info](http://aupe.org/update-info)

Keep an eye on your email inbox for more details about the Telephone Town Halls.