

# MEMBER UPDATE



## Government snubs mental-health and addictions workers

### Changes made without consultation, but you are still protected

The Alberta government is rushing ahead with major changes to the way care is provided for Albertans with mental-health and addictions issues.

It plans to have a new system up and running by July 1, less than three months away, even though it has not yet passed legislation that is required to make these changes or created new regulations.

Changes on this scale would be difficult even if enough time were allowed and if our health-care system wasn't already in crisis. To impose drastic changes while there is a critical shortage of health-care workers and while many of you are burned out is asking too much.

This is a recipe for chaos. The fault for any problems will be borne by the government.

#### Zero consultation

Once again, the government acted without consulting you, the front-line workers, or your union. This shows how little respect this government has for you and the vital work you do, despite its occasional and insincere praise for health-care heroes.

While the government claims that its decisions are evidence based, it's clear that isn't true. No changes to a system as large and complex and mental health and addictions can be made effectively without seeking the expert knowledge of the workers on the front line.

#### Who is affected?

The new organization providing care for mental health and addiction will be called Recovery Alberta.

People who are currently employed by Alberta Health Services (AHS) as part of Addiction and Mental Health and Correctional Services will become employees of Recovery Alberta.

#### Your collective agreement protects you

Despite the lack of respect your employer and the government have shown you, please remember that you are still protected by your collective agreement.

This announcement makes the ongoing round of collective bargaining even more important. Regardless of where you are being moved to, you are still negotiating with AHS and with the full strength of our tens of thousands of AHS members behind you.

If you experience any workplace issues as a result of the changes to the way you work, please contact AUPE's resource centre immediately and ask to talk to your Membership Services Officer (MSO).

You can contact the Member Resource Centre (MRC) here or by calling 1-800-232-7284.

The government says there will be no changes to them terms and conditions of your employment, including pay, benefits, pension and union affiliation. If you find that not to be true, contact the Member Resource Centre.

#### Engagement sessions

Alberta Health Services (AHS) and the government will hold four telephone town halls in April to let members find out more about the changes.

Details of these sessions, including dates and how to register, can be found in the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) the employer has already emailed to you.

That document also lists other ways to find out more. A copy of that document is attached to this Member Update for your convenience.