CUPE Working for You

Your workplace contract expired over two years ago. CUPE is fighting for a new contract. However, your employer’s bargaining committee (the Labour Relations Secretariat) continues to expect us to take a contract that would leave us worse, not better.

The top five things we are asking for:

1. Fair wages
   - The provincial government mandated the Health Authorities to negotiate two years of 0% wage increases (back-dated to 2012) because of the global economic crisis. We told them that for us to accept these 0’s, we would need a better contract than before, on things like vacation language, income protection improvements, improved contract language for casual workers, academic allowances for professional and nursing categories, etc. After months of bargaining, they are still unwilling to discuss these issues with us. We are all willing to do our part, but only if we get something fair in return.

2. Fair vacation language
   - Most other health care support workers in Manitoba operate under “working day” vacation language, including some CUPE members. This means that you can choose individual vacation days, rather than having to take your vacation in one week blocks. If you have a child’s graduation, or another special event – you can take that specific day off without special permission from the employer. We are fighting for single day vacation for you, but your employer is refusing to even discuss this with us. Everyone else has it; it’s only fair that we have it too!

3. No concessions
   - We believe that peoples’ lives should get better, not worse. Your employer is trying to make your contract worse-off than it was two years ago. Among other concessions, they want employees on unpaid leaves of absence to pay the employer’s portion of benefit premiums. CUPE grieved this unfair process and an arbitrator ruled in our favour. Now the employer wants to change the collective agreement to get around the arbitrator’s decision. Just like the arbitrator, we say no!

4. Talk to us!
   - Over the past two years, your employer has cancelled meeting dates, has taken months to get back to us with proposals, and has been needlessly dragging out this round of bargaining. We even had to file an Unfair Labour Practice (ULP) with the Manitoba Labour Board to get the employer to the table. Two years is too long to get a new contract. We want to get the
employer back to the table, so we can have meaningful conversations about improving your contract. How can we negotiate when the employer refuses to speak to us? CUPE is doing everything in our power to push for meaningful negotiations.

5. **Respect**

   - All of these issues mean one thing – your employer does not respect your right to negotiate a fair contract. CUPE is fighting for you, and we need your support!

**What next?**

On May 8th, the Province of Manitoba appointed a provincial mediator through the Manitoba Labour Board to assist by facilitating a resolution of a new collective agreement. The role of this mediator is to work with both parties in addressing key outstanding issues such as those outlined above. Rest assured that CUPE is fighting for you.

We are hopeful that this mediation process will help to bring both parties together to come to an agreement. CUPE will work within this process to reach an agreement that we feel will be acceptable to members. The fact that we have come this far should not dissuade us from continuing our fight. The mediator must provide a report to the Minister of Labour no later than June 9, 2014.

**Will we strike?**

After two years of bargaining, we share your frustration. While we are hopeful that mediation will bring about a resolution, there are no guarantees. We want to make sure everyone knows what the issues are, in case we have to take a strike vote. Our mandate was to do everything in our power to obtain a fair agreement. If mediation fails to result in a fair deal, your bargaining committee may make the decision to start calling for strike votes.

A strike vote does not mean we automatically go on strike – it means we are prepared to strike, if necessary. That should make your employer understand how serious we are about fairness.

CUPE continues to fight for you. We know many of you may be frustrated with the length of this process, but we are not the type of union that will simply accept a bad deal. We will fight, and we ask for your support.

**Here is what you can do to help:**

1) Talk to your co-workers, and share this letter.
2) Let your Local Executive know you want a fair deal.
3) Support us if we call for strike votes.

For more information or to contact us, visit our website at: [PHCC.CUPE.CA](http://phcc.cupe.ca)

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**Your Provincial Health Care Council and Bargaining Committee is:**

Val Sobiak (Chair), Gwen Bennett, Debbie Boissonneault, Marion Butterfield, Morgan Chagnon, Barbara Greengrass, Demi Kuzyk-Bernier, Judy Lavallee, Ric McAlpine, Marie Nixon, John Reynolds, Randy Roache, Marian Wood