



Newsletter

HEABC refuses to provide extended health benefits

HEABC has refused to apply an arbitrated decision that would entitle members of the Paramedical Professional Bargaining Association to be covered for the cost of visits to physiotherapists, massage therapists, chiropractors, naturopaths and podiatrists for non-surgical procedures. Before January 2002, these services were covered by the Medical Services Plan, but the Liberal government eliminated that coverage. Employers refused to cover these costs after they were dropped by MSP.

HSA, on behalf of the Paramedical Professional Bargaining Association (PPBA), filed a grievance claiming the services should be picked up by the Extended Health Benefits plan. The Nurses Bargaining Association (NBA) also filed a grievance, which proceeded first. HSA held its grievance in abeyance pending the outcome of the nurses' grievance.

Last month, after the Labour Relations Board upheld an earlier decision by an arbitrator, the NBA won the grievance. Since the contract language and circumstances are exactly the same for the PPBA, it was anticipated that as a result of the arbitrated decision, the same standards would be applied for members covered by the PPBA collective agreement.

However, HSA has learned that HEABC will not apply the decision, forcing the PPBA to embark on a legal path to recover the lost benefits.

Chris Allnutt, HEU's secretary-business manager says HEABC's position is untenable.

"This is an incredible waste of time and money. It's clear HEABC prefers to drag its feet on fairly applying the language and spirit of the collective agreement than to work cooperatively to deal with issues before they become a problem," he says.

Members who have been denied Extended Health Benefit claims are advised to retain any documentation, including receipts, pending the outcome of the PPBA grievance.

Please watch the HEU bulletin board and web site <http://www.heu.org> for updates.

February 20, 2004

