



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

BARGAINING BULLETIN

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HEU reaches tentative collective agreement with Sodexo

Proposed deal includes wage and benefit improvements, tackles health and safety, training, job posting language, workload issues

After six months of negotiations, bargaining committee members reached a tentative agreement with Sodexo late Sunday evening.

The committee made gains on the three priority issues identified at the bargaining conference – wages, benefits and sick leave. The proposed contract would see wage rates of \$13.05 an hour increase by 15 per cent to \$15 an hour by October 1, 2011. Benefit costs would also return to 70 per cent employer-paid and 30 per cent employee-paid as of October 1, 2009.

The committee also got agreement on improvements to non-monetary issues such as workload, training, job posting language, treatment of casuals, return-to-work programs, and the process to deal with paycheque errors.

HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy joined lead negotiator Susan Fisher in the most recent set of talks. Mediator Vince Ready was also on-hand to assist in reaching an agreement.

“I am proud to say that we made significant progress toward a living wage, despite the challenges of an economic recession and growing unemployment,” said Darcy.

“The committee could not have achieved these gains without the tireless work of living wage activists and the strong strike mandate from so many members, and we will continue all efforts to ensure members have the working conditions needed for clean, safe hospitals.”

Darcy praised the bargaining committee for their hard work and for keeping the needs of members front and centre at all times.

She added that although negotiations were long and sometimes difficult, Sodexo showed that they could work with the union to find solutions and make improvements that will strengthen health care services for patients and the rest of the health care team.

The proposed agreement would be effective from October 1, 2008 up to and including September 30, 2012.

Improvements to wages, benefits, sick days

The following increases cover all HEU members employed by Sodexo		New hourly rates for members earning \$13.05/hour
January 1, 2009 (retroactive)	\$.30 per hour	\$13.35
April 1, 2009 (retroactive)	\$.35 per hour	\$13.70
October 1, 2009	\$.40 per hour	\$14.10
October 1, 2010	\$.40 per hour	\$14.50
October 1, 2011	\$.50 per hour	\$15.00

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Other monetary gains:

- sick leave is increased by one day on September 1, 2010 and by an additional day on September 1, 2011 for a total of eight sick days per year;
- benefit cost-sharing goes to 70 per cent employer-paid and 30 per cent employee-paid as of October 1, 2009. *Note: improvements to benefits for casual workers are listed below;*
- probation period rate of pay is increased by \$.25 an hour, effective on the date of ratification, and
- night shift premium is increased from \$.70 per hour to \$1.00 per hour effective on the date of ratification.

Improvements and workforce stabilization for casu

A large number of HEU members employed by Sodexo are classified as casu. Under the proposed terms of the agreement, they will see the following improvements:

- casu who are off work due to injuries or illness will continue to collect seniority, based on their hours of work over the previous six months, and
- agreement in principal that casual employees working 20 or more hours per week for 12 weeks will be converted to float regular status and will receive benefits. *More details will be available in the comprehensive report.*

Better health and safety, job posting and other language

The proposed collective agreement contains new and strengthened language that includes:

- tools to hold the employer accountable for issues related to workload, training and supplies shortages;
- requirements for job postings to specify the work site and work area;
- protections to ensure members' work areas are reassigned only when there is an operational requirement to do so, and only when they have been trained to perform that work;
- requirements that reassignments be based on seniority, not on the discretion of supervisors or managers;
- procedures for fixing paycheque errors of more than six hours that require the employer to issue a cheque for the remaining amount within five business days, and
- options to transfer seniority between work sites.

HEU members working for Sodexo must ratify the proposed agreement in votes that will be scheduled early in May. Further details of the proposed agreement will be available in a comprehensive report, distributed over the coming days.

The 2008 and 2009 wage and benefit improvements would also apply to HEU members employed by Sodexo at Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre, who negotiated a collective agreement more than a year ago. A bulletin for these members will be distributed shortly.

Negotiations with Aramark and Compass are continuing as this bulletin is being issued.

For more information about bargaining with Sodexo, contact your bargaining committee members or Susan Fisher at 604-456-7030, toll-free 1-800-663-5813.

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