



Facilities' talks on hold as employers consider union proposals

Talks for a new contract covering 47,000 health workers are on hold until next week.

Health employers say they need the time to craft new proposals including a response to a comprehensive package tabled by the multi-union Facilities Bargaining Association on Wednesday.

The FBA package addresses key priorities for union members including fair and reasonable wage increases, benefit protection, job security, expansion of seniority rights, and provisions to address crushing levels of workload.

In addition, the unions are looking to restore vacation entitlements frozen in 2012, adjust premiums and save money through the contracting in of trades and maintenance work.

FBA spokesperson Bonnie Pearson says when health employers return to the table next week, they need to come with a constructive response to the unions' proposals.

"We have been at the bargaining table for two months and have seen little more than provocation and delay from health employers," says Pearson, who is also secretary-business manager of the Hospital Employees' Union.

"We've been more than patient, but our patience is wearing thin.

"Employers need to consider their next move very carefully," says Pearson. "The time for posturing and provocation is over. We need to engage in some serious bargaining in the weeks ahead."

"This is a complex bargaining unit covering hundreds of classifications of workers in our hospitals, residential care facilities, ambulance and emergency health services and the supply chain," adds Pearson.

"Bargaining this collective agreement requires care and attention. I hope we see some of this from employers next week."

The eleven-union FBA represents a wide range of workers including care aides, ambulance paramedics, health records staff, lab and other diagnostic specialists, sterile supply technicians, emergency dispatch personnel, trades and maintenance workers, activity aides and rehab assistants, IT specialists, pharmacy technicians, admitting and booking clerks, administrative staff, cleaning and dietary staff, and many others.

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