



February 2011

Dear ONA Member in the Hospital Sector,

Hospital Sector Bargaining Update from Week 2

Your Hospital Central Negotiating Team (HCNT) has just completed the second week of negotiations with the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA). The week featured a lot of discussion, some constructive. But in the final analysis, there was very little progress made on the key issues.

This is, in part, because the employers are holding to the provincial government's restraint initiatives, and also because the OHA not only opposes the priority proposals from our membership, but has tabled a number of its own that either remove or weaken the very rights that we are proposing to strengthen. Unfortunately, it looks like we are headed on a collision course going into mediation.

Your team wants to assure you, the members, that we are totally committed to the priority areas that you identified in the *Have a Say* questionnaire, and that we will never waiver or give up in our efforts to achieve them for you. What we mean by this is:

- When members are struggling to make ends meet due to rising costs and see others, especially high income earners, receive increases to their incomes, we say NO to the platform of "no net compensation increase," and fight for wage and benefit levels that properly reflect our value to the health care system.
- When too many Bargaining Unit positions are being eliminated and members are losing jobs, we say NO to the employers' efforts to weaken our layoff and recall rights and remove the very severance packages on which our members rely to live while unemployed. Instead, your team fights to prevent all layoffs/reductions in positions, including those brought on by unilateral and ill-thought-out skill mix changes by employers, and ensure that those who must be laid off are treated with dignity and respect.
- When the employers blame nurses for increasing sick leave costs, we categorically REJECT their proposal to GUT the existing sick leave provisions by paying much less to those who are sick or injured; this on top of the draconian attendance awareness plans that they or their contractors administer. Instead, we call on the employers to address the root problem and institute positive wellness initiatives, address rampant overtime leading to burnout, replace members who are absent from the unit, give the meal and break periods that the contract requires, approve the vacations that our members have earned...and the list of obvious solutions goes on.

- When members tell us that your workloads are unbearable and getting worse, we REJECT the notion that nurses cannot have a greater say in decision making around models of care, staffing levels and financial decisions. Instead, we fight for the right for real input into hospital decision making, for the right to information that will assist our representatives in these matters and for workload protection language that has real teeth.

These are but some of the challenges your team faces as we head into mediation on March 8, 16 and 17, 2011. During that time, the parties will be assisted by Kevin Burkett, one of Canada's most respected mediators. Mr. Burkett was instrumental in bringing about our 2008-11 hospital contract and we look forward to his able assistance this round as well.

Members can assist by contacting your Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) and asking for support for our priority issues, nursing and health care. Ensure your MPP is aware that we will stand strong against the gutting of our sick plan and job security provisions. For information on how to contact your MPP, log onto the ONA website at www.ona.org, click on "Political Action," and then "Contact Your MPP."

Our updates will be available on the ONA website under "Bargaining News." Members of the team will, from time to time, contact Bargaining Unit Presidents in their regions for any feedback the team may need.

If you have any questions for the HCNT, please send them to ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud at lindahs@ona.org. Linda will see they are brought to the team's attention.

Sincerely,

ONTARIO NURSES' ASSOCIATION



Pat MacDonald, RN, Local 70
Hospital Central Negotiating Team Chair

The Hospital Central Negotiating Team is a determined, decisive and professional team focused on membership priorities. We will produce significant results through our strategic, knowledgeable and innovative approaches.