



# Bargaining Bulletin

## Provider Group Common Table

SAHO met with the provider group unions (CUPE, SEIU-West and SGEU) the week of November 25-27.

The unions provided a wage demand late on Wednesday with clarification on their other proposals.

After the provider group issued a news release on Thursday, November 26, SAHO responded to requests from the media for comments. Excerpt from Star Phoenix article on Friday, November 27: “Although we appreciate that they have finally given us what their wage proposal is, we still think that what they have on the table is unrealistic in this particular competitive environment,” SAHO president and CEO Susan Antosh said Thursday afternoon.” There are still a lot of items that would have monetary impact that could more than double the cost of what they’ve stated as the cost of their agreement.”

SAHO responded on Thursday with an enhanced comprehensive proposal package, including a reduction in language proposals and increasing the general wage offer to 2.4% in the fourth year of the contract. The Employer’s wage offer is now 2.75% - 2% - 2.25% - 2.4% over a 4 year term (April 1, 2008 – March 31, 2012) as well as market adjustments for a number of classifications. Items previously proposed by the unions which are not included in the employers’ package are considered rejected by the employers. It is our expectation that the unions will engage in meaningful negotiations and drop some of their proposals in exchange for the enhancements that SAHO is offering. At this point in time, the unions have simply added the wage demands on top of their most recent proposal package.

The unions responded late Thursday that the Employer’s latest offer was not acceptable. They also indicated they would be presenting additional monetary proposals regarding retention and recruitment when the parties next met (December 1 – 3).

On Friday, the SAHO/Employer committee told the unions our goal is to have a collective agreement that makes our employees competitive in the appropriate comparative western Canadian markets and that our current offer is proposed to accomplish that. The SAHO/Employer committee also made it clear to the unions that a settlement patterned on the SUN collective agreement is not realistic. SAHO values all health care workers and believes that providing market competitive wages demonstrates that the employees are valued.

The unions have accused SAHO of not sharing research data. Employers have provided information regarding number of FTEs and employment status to the unions, apart from the regular data that is provided monthly. Both parties in collective bargaining have a responsibility to conduct research in support of their position. It is not the employers’ responsibility to do the unions’ research. In discussion of specific items or market adjustments for classifications, specific information may be exchanged between the parties.

SAHO has provided documentation to the unions, and posted the same on the working-together.info web site for the public’s information, that supports the rationale that the general wage increase and market related adjustments proposed by SAHO ensure that Saskatchewan health care workers have competitive wages when compared to appropriate competitive markets in western Canada.

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SAHO's objective in concluding a collective agreement is to provide competitive wages in relation to the appropriate competitive markets— competitive means comparing favourably with others, it does not mean being 'equal'. The principles of pay equity remain in place.

The unions presented SAHO with a prepared statement on the unions' position on Friday, asked SAHO to leave the meeting and then left the bargaining session, without the courtesy of notifying SAHO.

SAHO is committed to completing the collective agreement in a timely manner. Our perspective, and that of the employers we represent, includes not only the employee resources, but the needs and requirements of the clients, patients and residents we serve. Since the beginning of negotiations, we have publicly stated our first objective in negotiating collective agreements is "putting patients first."

SAHO and the employers value ALL health care workers and demonstrate this by:

- proposing competitive wages and proposing market adjustments where necessary;
- proposing to change the JJE process to streamline the process for those classifications who have been waiting for decisions
- proposing language changes that would allow increased patient focus while maintaining competitive wages and a quality workplace.

Meetings are scheduled to resume December 1 – 3.

SAHO/CUPE Bargaining Committee  
SAHO/SEIU Bargaining Committee  
SAHO/SGEU Bargaining Committee

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