

## Common Table – Setting the Record Straight

SAHO tabled an initial offer with the provider unions on September 22. Since then the unions have issued bulletins and news releases with public comments on the package. It is apparent that clarification is needed on some of the proposals.

### ***Some of the questions you might have in understanding the initial offer:***

<b><i>Provider Group Unions Claim</i></b>	<b><i>Employer/SAHO Response</i></b>
<b><i>“All or nothing”</i></b>	SAHO’s initial offer was presented as a package including language already agreed to by the parties, general wage increases and market related adjustments, and language proposed by SAHO to contribute to an effective and productive quality health care system. SAHO does not wish to discuss the package piecemeal, as at this stage of collective bargaining the entire cost of the new collective agreement is being determined through the negotiations. SAHO and the Employers presented a package and expect that union counterproposals will also be packages.
<b>Home Care hours of work (CUPE)</b>	<p>The employers have a proposal which would recognize the unique client care requirements of the Home Care Program. Collective bargaining agreements with other health care unions (SEIU, SGEU and SUN) have contract language on hours of work specific to the Home Care Program.</p> <p>The employers’ proposal to CUPE would create guaranteed hours of work for employees and the assignment of these hours would be governed by provision of consistent and timely client care that responds to the clients’ needs. It is the employers’ belief that these provisions would enhance the employers’ ability to create more full time employment opportunities for Home Care employees as well as provide increased continuity of care for home care clients.</p> <p>The employer has proposed that employees would work no more than eight (8) hours in any one day that would be restricted to two (2) occasions within a twelve (12) hour period on any one day.</p> <p>This proposal would specifically apply to approximately 920 Home Care employees in CUPE regions.</p>
<b>No retroactivity for retirees</b>	In the past retroactivity for those employees who retired between the date of the expiration of the contract and the date of signing of the new collective agreement has been negotiated. This is, and has been in the past, a matter for negotiations.

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<b>Provider Group Unions Claim</b>	<b>Employer/SAHO Response</b>
<p><b>Market supplements are temporary market adjustments</b></p>	<p>SAHO has proposed market related adjustments for some classifications that met the dual criteria of difficult to recruit and having a wage rate that could be perceived as significantly lower than comparable competitive markets in western Canada. The market related adjustments would be effective upon date of signing of the collective agreement. Subsequent general wage increases would be added to the base rate of pay and the market adjustment would be added to the new base rate of pay. The union has not explained how this is viewed as temporary. Link to <a href="#">Wage Rates for Market Adjustment Classifications</a></p>
<p><b>Recruitment and retention issues for huge number of classifications (SEIU)</b></p> <p>An SEIU media release dated September 30, 2009 states;</p> <p><i>“The SEIU-West Bargaining Committee has highlighted to both SAHO and the government the many ‘hard to recruit’ classifications and worker shortages that should be evident and must be addressed.”</i></p>	<p>Yet SEIU has not specified any classifications through bargaining that they believe should be considered as hard to recruit. SAHO has proposed market adjustments for some classifications that meet both of the following criteria: hard to recruit and wages are not competitive with appropriate comparable markets in western Canada. The union has failed to provide SAHO with a list of classifications they believe are hard to recruit or specific proposal(s) to address those classifications.</p> <p>For a substantial number of other classifications, we are already competitive with the appropriate comparable market. In some classifications, comparable markets do not offer as high a wage, or the same level of benefits, that health care employers offer to the employees within the health care system.</p>
<p><b>No real offer for the LPNs</b></p>	<p>The union has said there is no real offer for the LPNs in the initial proposal. Besides the general wage increase proposed to all union members, SAHO has offered to expedite the Joint Job Evaluation process for LPNs due to the education change. SAHO anticipates that this will mean a move to a pay grade 15 for LPNs. By offering to expedite the process, LPNs would see the pay increase sooner. If it is not expedited, the LPNs will not see that pay increase until the joint committee can discuss it in the normal course of all maintenance reviews currently in the queue. Considering the typical length of time it takes the committee to review an application and the present backlog, it could be up to 2 years before the LPNs will receive the pay increase. Changes to any job classification through the JJE process require agreement between the union and the Employer. SAHO and Employers are simply asking the unions for agreement to expedite the LPN review. The unions have failed to explain why they would not support a quicker pay increase for LPNs.</p>

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<p><b>Nurses and out of scope employees received higher increases</b></p>	<p>The increases negotiated with SUN were consistent with the employers’ approach to provide compensation that is competitive with western Canadian markets. In the case of nurses, the increases were provided to ensure that employers were able to recruit and retain sufficient nurses to meet the needs of the health care system. The increase offered to the provider unions similarly reflects the competitive market for such health care jobs in western Canadian markets.</p> <p>Out of scope employees received a 3% general wage increase in 2008 and 2009, however these health care employees do not have the option of negotiating terms of employment and working conditions. Any change in general wages is imposed.</p> <p>The cumulative monetary increase for the provider group of health care workers, since 1997, is significantly higher than the increases given to out of scope employees. The increases for the provider group are also significantly higher than the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Link to <a href="#">Cumulative Monetary Increases.pdf</a></p>
<p><b>The offer is lower than the cost of living and lower than the average public sector wage settlement</b></p>	<p>The consumer price index (CPI) as reported by Statistics Canada for Saskatchewan, showed an increase of 3.2% for 2008 and an increase of 1.3% to date in 2009. SAHO has proposed a general wage increase of 2.75% and 2% for 2008 and 2009 respectively. Simple addition would indicate that the proposed general wage increases are higher than the cost of living increases. Link to <a href="#">Cumulative Monetary Increases.pdf</a></p> <p>According to the September, 2009 Workplace Bulletin, issued by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, wage adjustments in the public sector in July 2009 averaged 2% (down from 2.7% in May and 3% in June). The same bulletin reports that average annual percentage wage adjustments by month specifically in the education, health and social services sector was 1.4% for July, 2009. Link to <a href="#">HRSDC Workplace Bulletin</a></p>

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<p><b>Joint Job Evaluation Process (SGEU)</b></p> <p><i>“This is just another example of systemic discrimination against groups that are traditionally female-dominated and providing caregiving type of work in this province,” Bymoer said. “If most of these classifications were male dominated would the government still be offering them this offer or would we bring it closer to what the doctors in this province are paid?”</i></p> <p>(Bob Bymoer, Star Phoenix, October 1)</p>	<p>The joint job evaluation process, which is a process jointly developed and maintained by unions and employers, establishes wage rates for classifications based on levels of skill (education and experience), effort, responsibilities and working conditions. This has provided for pay equity within the classifications and ensures that gender is not an issue in determining wage rates.</p>
<p><b>Rollbacks to JJE process</b></p>	<p>SAHO has proposed changes to streamline the JJE process in return for mitigating the overpayments that some employees received when the JJE process was implemented. In other words, SAHO proposals will expedite the process and reduce the money owed by some union members to their employers.</p>
<p><b>Dismantle the JJE</b></p>	<p>The unions appear to have interpreted the proposals to changes in the joint job evaluation process as dismantling the committee. SAHO has proposed a reduction in the size of the joint committee to half of its current size (3 union representatives and 3 employer representatives) to reduce costs and speed up the decision-making process. In addition, SAHO has proposed a revised process to deal with the backlog of maintenance requests. This proposal would include a final, “neutral third party” step if the decision is not agreed to by the union or the employer. The union has failed to explain why they wouldn’t want a quicker turn-around on decisions for its members and allow employees to spend more time supporting care of our patients, clients and residents.</p>