

BULLETIN

HEABC still not ready to defend refusal to implement contract; arbitration delayed

April 24, 2012

After months of preparation, the Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association (HSPBA) appeared before arbitrator John Hall Monday to argue an application for interim relief in a policy grievance that alleges HEABC is in contravention of the 2010-2012 HSPBA collective agreement for failing or refusing to work towards the objectives agreed to in bargaining.

But the arbitrator adjourned the hearing because HEABC claimed, for the second time, it was not ready to defend allegations it is violating the terms of the 2010-2012 collective agreement, as a result of current collective bargaining.

Jeanne Meyers, HSPBA Chief Negotiator, and Executive Director of Labour Relations and Legal Services of HSA, said the delay is uncalled for.

-The employers have demonstrated, again, their disregard for the processes negotiated in the 2010-12 contract," Meyers said. -This policy grievance was filed in November, and included a claim for interim relief. Over three weeks ago, the employers had notice that we would be seeking interim relief April 23. This week the employers position in front of the arbitrator was that they hadnt had time to prepare."

-HSA is as busy with contract negotiations as HEABC is. But were not about to abandon our responsibility to hold HEABC accountable to terms and conditions negotiated in the last agreement, even as we work to make progress on a new collective agreement for 2012 and beyond," she said.

HSPBA charges that the employer is refusing to adhere to the terms and conditions negotiated in the 2010-2012 agreement by failing or refusing to work towards fulfillment of the objectives outlined for the Joint Classifications Committee, negotiated in that agreement.

The union association believes that health authorities are prohibited from implementing any of the interim classification modifications because the right to do so was conditional upon the Joint Classifications Committee fulfilling its objectives.

While the union bargaining association worked diligently on finding creative and innovative ways to approach the classification system, HEABC did not reciprocate. Instead, health authorities moved straight to implementation of the interim modifications, which triggered loss of access to supervision, and a downgrade of grid level for certain members ... affecting their pay level.

-The unions agreement to modify grid levels was contingent on a real and workable commitment to overhauling the classification system. HEABC refused to be productive in that area. Thats unacceptable, and it is completely contrary to the agreement," Meyers said.

The grievance hearing was rescheduled to be heard at the end of June.

Bargaining for a new collective agreement resumes next week.

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