



BULLETIN

DATE: December 19, 2018

HSA Board of Directors offers a qualified recommendation to members to vote in favour of proposed 2019-2022 nurses' contract

The Nurses Bargaining Association reached a tentative agreement with HEABC on November 25, 2018. The term of the agreement is April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2022.

HSA was represented at the bargaining table by staff negotiator Alyson Warner and member representative Nicole McIntosh, an RPN at St. Paul's Hospital. They report that they had opportunities for input and relations were cordial until the final day of bargaining, when the NBA's chief negotiator asked for the bargaining committee to agree to a tentative agreement without sharing the details of the tentative agreement.

Upon reviewing the details of the proposed agreement, the HSA committee recommended that the HSA Board of Directors recommend to HSA members covered by the agreement to vote "yes" in favour of the agreement, but expressed concern about some of the provisions, including:

- Proposals related to potential future changes to benefits and pension administration:
 - The committee structure negotiated does not guarantee sustainability of existing benefits or adequacy of funding levels.
 - The exploration of alternate pension models will likely prove to be a lengthy and complex process given the fiduciary obligations that arise.
- Caps are being placed on overtime bank accumulation and the use of worked overtime for time off.
- Changes are proposed to the casual provisions to require casuals to work at least 50 per cent of their hours in the peak periods of March (spring break); June 15- September 15, and December. There is also more rigorous language proposed to monitor casual availability, and to remove casuals from the register if they do not meet the availability requirements.

- A “working short” premium, to be introduced in the second year of the agreement that would pay a \$3 - \$5 per hour premium for every hour worked when staffing is below baseline. There are occupational health and safety concerns related to this provision. The “working short” premium was funded by selling off the “will replace” language which protected nurses from inadequate backfill.
- Union leave will be more difficult to get during peak periods

Notwithstanding those concerns, after a full canvass of the provisions of the tentative agreement, HSA’s Board of Directors felt that, on the balance the terms and conditions of the proposed agreement, including a two per cent a year general wage increase, leave enhancements, and a commitment to address workload and occupational health and safety concerns collaboratively with employers and all health care workers, are favourable for nurses.

The Board of Directors, therefore, offers qualified support for the tentative agreement, but urges nurses to carefully consider the proposed agreement and implications for their working life.

Voting on the terms of the proposed agreement will be by mail, with packages being mailed this week.

All HSA members covered by the Nurse Bargaining Association will receive a voting package in the mail. If you do not receive a package, contact HSA at contract@hsabc.org