

HSPBA Tentative Agreement Clarification Regarding Changes to Grade I and II Positions

Questions from members indicate that there is some confusion regarding the changes to the Grade I and Grade II positions. There are two changes in the tentative agreement that impact members in these grades, one that takes effect on April 1, 2011 and the other is a future "priority", but is subject to funding and negotiation in a future agreement.

The first is titled "Interim Classification Modifications". This language suspends the definition of "General Supervision" in the classification section of our existing contract. The effect of suspending that definition is that all employees in Grade II positions classified at that level due to working without general supervision will have their wages red-circled in their current position. If they leave their position, they will lose the red-circling protection. Vacancies in those positions will be reposted at a Grade I level. This change comes into effect on April 1, 2011 and the funds saved by the employer from this change (along with the reduction of one vacation day, effective July 1, 2010) will help to pay for the benefit increases that come into effect on January 1, 2012.

The second is titled "Classification System Implementation". This language refers to the newly created Joint Classification Committee which was formed to make recommendations to the parties regarding a new classification system. As part of that new system, the parties agreed that: "the introduction of a full working level professional is an important priority and the parties will make every reasonable effort to fulfill this priority. This priority is subject to the allocation of sufficient funding and will be deemed satisfied once the wage rate of the full scope working level professional is equal to the existing Grade II rate of pay."

The effect of this proposal is to confirm that it is a priority of the parties in a future bargaining round to negotiate a new classification system in which all Grade I members would move to Grade II, provided that there is money to do so. That's it. There is no money or agreement to do it for this contract. There is also no promise of retroactive pay for those affected by the drop to Grade I or any guarantee that any of this will happen ever. Given that the government expects another zero mandate for the next round of bargaining, it seems to be an especially empty promise.

It is important to understand when you vote on this contract that your decision whether to support it or not be based on the actual impacts of this contract, not mere promises to deal with issues in a future contract, subject to funding.

For this and other reasons, CUPE's Healthcare President's Council remains concerned that this contract's negative impacts outweigh the new benefit increases and other changes. We recommend that you vote "No" on this contract.