



CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
BRITISH COLUMBIA DIVISION

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January 31, 2011

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

RE: Open letter to HSPBA CUPE members from Barry O'Neill

As you will know, last week CUPE members in the Health Sciences Professionals Bargaining Association received an update titled "HSPBA Tentative Agreement Clarification Regarding Changes to Grade I and II Positions." In response to that document, the Health Sciences Association (HSA) released a 4-page letter to its members in which it made a number of inaccurate or misleading statements about CUPE and our communications to you during the ongoing ratification process.

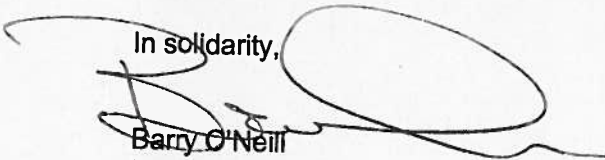
First, we make no apologies for taking a position that differs from the HSA's on this issue. The simple fact of the matter is, we are not the lead union at the bargaining table. However, we are part of a collective of workers with the same goals in mind with a voice to move us toward achieving those goals. While your CUPE negotiating team took a strong stand at the HSPBA on the contract language and provisions we continue to oppose, the tentative agreement did not reflect what you told us you wanted in your agreement. We have communicated those differences of opinion to you clearly in our recommendation to vote "No" to this agreement, but never did we attack any of the other unions at the table. We understand that others may have a different view, and we fully respect their right to communicate that to their members as we did to you suggesting a recommendation. So I am somewhat taken aback at the angry tone and accusatory language in the HSA's most recent update.

Second, the HSA has taken a completely gratuitous shot at our Ambulance Paramedic sisters and brothers in Local 873. Perhaps better than any other union in the province, CUPE members understand the frustration of other unions negotiating in the current environment under the BC Liberal government's "net-zero" mandate. And that understanding is based on the fight that CUPE 873 waged against both the "net-zero" mandate as well as the two-tiered wage structure in the health care sector. I'm not sure what point the HSA was trying to make to its members by denigrating the efforts of another union, but I find it offensive in the extreme that another union would choose such a divisive and dismissive approach to this issue.

From our perspective, the fight for a fair deal for health sciences professionals has only just begun. We believe the tentative agreement does not deliver what you deserve, and that's why we're advocating that you vote no. At the end of the day, though, it's up to you—and all workers in this sector, regardless of which union they belong to. I urge you to read all information about the tentative agreement very carefully before deciding how to vote.

I have always believed very strongly in the principle of Solidarity—we are always stronger when we stand together, and we are always weakened when we are divided. I hope that the other unions in the HSPBA will join with us to fight back on the real issue: the fact that the current BC Liberal government has created an environment in which it is impossible for free collective bargaining to take place.

In solidarity,


Barry O'Neill
President
CUPE BC Division

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Barry O'Neill, President
Mark Hancock, Secretary-Treasurer

