



Health Care Bargaining Unit Frequently Asked Questions

Introduction

We have held a two town halls with members to walk through the tentative agreement achieved for the Health Care bargaining unit. Based on those sessions, here are some of the most frequently asked questions we have received:

Questions

Q. Why does the highlights document state the first catchup adjustment would apply April 1st, 2024, while the detailed documents say it applies November 1st, 2024?

A. The highlights document was incorrect. As outlined in the detailed MOA and as explained during our town halls, April 1st, 2024, is the date used for data comparison. The application of any catchup adjustments resulting from that comparison will happen effective November 1st, 2024, and April 1st, 2025.

Q. What wage adjustments will I receive if this agreement is ratified?

A. Due in large part to the complexity of this bargaining unit (it includes more than 9,100 members working in approximately 180 different occupations), the wage provisions are complex: the monetary increases you receive depend on your occupation, how many years of service you have (what step you fall on in the current wage grid), and how your occupation compares to your counterparts in Atlantic Canada.

However, **at minimum**, everyone will receive the basic economic adjustments of:

- **3%** (effective November 1st, 2023), and
- **2%** (effective November 1st, 2024).

Everyone except for Care Team Assistants (CTAs) and Paramedics will receive the Special Acute Care adjustment of:

- **2.5%** (effective April 1st, 2024).

Then all classifications except Paramedics will receive another:

- **2.5%** step to the top of the scale (effective October 31, 2024), and
- **2.5%** step to the top of the scale (effective October 31, 2025).

For those occupations who are not leading in Atlantic Canada, there will be special catch-up adjustments of up to:

- **2.5%** (effective November 1, 2024), and
- **2.5%** (effective April 1st, 2025).

*** Note: Care Team Assistants received an extra adjustment prior to this agreement and are currently highest paid for their classification in Atlantic Canada. Paramedics have been matched to EMC paramedics (see details on paramedic wages in the settlement details).*

Here is what those increases look like, compounded, for different groups who are at the top of their scale:

Group	Over 2 Years	Compound Total
Classifications receiving all adjustments	Nov. 1, 2023, to Oct. 31, 2025	18.87%
CTAs	Nov. 1, 2023, to Oct. 31, 2025	10.38%
ACPs	Nov. 1, 2023, to Oct. 31, 2025	21.89%
CCPs	Nov. 1, 2023, to Oct 31, 2025	14.90%
PCPs	Nov. 1, 2023, to Oct. 31, 2025	21.91%
Classifications Receiving no catchup adjustments	Nov. 1, 2023, to Oct. 31, 2025	13.14%
Classifications Receiving one catchup adjustment	Nov. 1, 2023, to Oct. 31, 2025	15.96%

***Note: Registered Nurses received 15 to 21% compounded over their five-year deal and 13% compounded over the last two years. LPNs received 12 to 17% compounded over their 5-year deal (excluding a 12% reclassification for LPNs in June 2020).*

Q. How do I know if I am eligible for those special catch-up adjustments, and whether I will receive the full 5%?

A. A joint committee will be struck between the unions and employers to evaluate each occupation and determine whether they were highest paid in Atlantic Canada as of April 1st, 2024. If the committee cannot come to an agreement, that occupation will be referred to arbitration. The arbitrator will look at data provided from both parties and determine whether you are eligible for the special adjustment, what the wage discrepancy is, and how much of the 5% you will receive.

Q. I am at the first step. Does this deal mean I will only receive 7.69% over two years?

A. You will receive at least 7.69% over two years. You are also eligible for up to 5% in catch-up adjustments if your classification is not leading in Atlantic Canada. You will also be eligible for two future step increases of 2.5%, bringing the full future value to at least 13.14% even without the catch-up adjustments.

Q. My occupation is a one-off – there is no Atlantic Canadian comparator. Does that mean I am not eligible for special catch-up adjustments?

A. Those classifications with no match in Atlantic Canada will still have access to these two adjustments. Eligibility for these classifications will be determined based on whether their wages are creating recruitment and retention challenges (see Clause 4 of the Wage Adjustment MOA in the details section of this package).

Q. What about members who already have a market adjustment?

A. The market adjustments for all eight classifications who have previous market adjustments (Sex Offender Psychologist Master, Perfusionist, Team Lead Perfusionist, Team Leader Perfusionist, Cardiac Sonographer, Vascular Diagnostic Technologist, Dental Assistant, Certified Prosthetics / Orthotics Clinician) will have those market adjustments rolled into their base rate of pay effective November 1, 2023, prior to the application of the 3% economic increase.

Q. Why is this only a two-year agreement?

A. This agreement concludes October 31st, 2025. A two-year deal aligns the agreement with the Nursing Council and Administrative Professionals dates and was a key demand of the Health Care Unions. Civil Service has started their contract negotiations, and they have the right to binding arbitration, as they do not have the right to strike. As a result, they are well-positioned to establish a wage pattern that is closely tied to the rate of inflation.

Q. Why is the bargaining committee recommending we vote to accept this tentative agreement?

A. Your committee spent 15 days at the bargaining table with employer representatives. After many long days at the table, they have achieved a tentative agreement that focuses on retaining current employees as a priority and recruiting future employees by enshrining language that recognizes that health care employees in Nova Scotia Health should be highest paid in Atlantic Canada. This two-year deal may not put all classifications to the highest paid in the region, but it will move them either to leading or closer to leading.

Furthermore, the committee achieved important language improvements impacting collective agreements for health care professionals at Nova Scotia Health.

Q. What if this agreement is rejected?

A. If this agreement is rejected, a strike vote will be held with the bargaining unit. We will need a very high participation rate to ensure we have a strong strike mandate (strike votes must be 50% plus one of the entire bargaining unit, whereas ratification votes are based upon the total number of members who voted). We also must achieve an Essential Services Agreement, as is required under the Health Authorities Act. That work has been underway for the better part of a year, with union representatives meeting with the employer on at least 12 occasions to try and force them to produce a complete and accurate plan. That process has been referred to the Labour Board, but a plan is still not in place. We would have to wait until a plan has been completed before taking strike action.