



Health Support Council of Unions Bargaining Update

Dear CUPE member,

In our previous update, we shared that your bargaining committee was able to develop a very comprehensive wage package and presented it to the employers on **December 5, 2024**.

The wage package included significant monetary increases for all classifications and focused on your integral role in the health care team. More than two months later, there has been no response to this proposal.

The employers still won't discuss money.

Your committee met with the employers on Wednesday, February 12, and yet again, we received no response to our wage proposal.

There was no offer of even shift and weekend premiums that were given to the other bargaining units (Nursing, Health Care, and Administrative Professionals). The employers only proposed language that would allow them to more easily contract out your work and limit your seniority rights. The committee firmly rejected those proposals and left the meeting angry and frustrated at the lack of respect shown to them, and all of you, by the employers.

The committee feels the employers have no real interest in bargaining and are deliberately delaying the process and not negotiating the language and wage adjustments that you all deserve.

Health Support workers are losing purchasing power.

Nova Scotia's minimum wage is rising 8% this year—a move the Houston government is very proud of—yet this government has yet to offer anything to the health care workers who keep buildings clean and operational and keep patients fed every single day. This move, while positive for Nova Scotians, erodes the value of your current wages and will make it even harder to recruit and retain workers in these essential health care jobs.

Health care support workers are being completely left behind and poorly treated by a system that hailed them as heroes just a few short years ago. Hospitals would close and be unable to care for Nova Scotians without the work done by all of you.

The Houston government has recently announced \$2.35 billion in infrastructure spending with a significant portion being slated for hospital expansions and upgrades. There is no mention of wages for the workers who will actually keep these facilities operational and open.

This entire bargaining process has been very slow and frustrating for your committee and we understand your frustration, as well. There is no reason you should be waiting this long for a super-majority government and your employers to get serious about wage improvements and negotiating a new collective agreement.

Next steps after five months of bargaining.

The committee exchanged proposals with the employers in September 2024 and are still miles apart from any agreement. There are numerous outstanding language provisions that either the employer has not responded to or have rejected in addition to our wage package.

Premier Houston promised to fix health care, but not completing collective bargaining for your bargaining unit and not recognizing the vital role your work plays in the health care team *fails to fix health care*. Health care cannot be “fixed” if they are ignoring an essential piece of that system.

The essential services negotiation process has not paused and is still ongoing. That committee has met several times with additional dates scheduled during February. That separate negotiation is moving along and will allow you to be in a legal strike position—if need be.

The bargaining committee will next meet with your employers on February 25, 26 and 27.

Please watch your emails, and share this information with your coworkers. We will be reaching out to all of you in the near future about what our next steps will be.

If you have any questions or concerns about the bargaining process, please contact your Area VP.

