

HOLSOME PLACE BARGAINING SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

Your bargaining committee would like to thank all the members who took the time to fill in our bargaining survey, which gave us a good understanding of the problems we are facing collectively in our workplace.

With your help we will be able to keep our group engaged and informed throughout the bargaining process.

WHAT WE LEARNED

The survey results paint a picture of a membership struggling to make ends meet because of low pay and inadequate benefits. At the same time, members expressed how short-staffing, heavy workloads and lack of respect from management are leading to health and safety concerns.

Wages

60% of respondents said that wages don't reflect the value of our work and the workload we deal with. Members spoke about needing significant wage increases, and 96% said that they expect pay increases to follow the same increases that were agreed to between RNs and AHS. Also, 100% of respondents said that they want guarantees that our wages will keep up with inflation.

Here is what members said in their own words about wages:

- *[An] LPN in Alberta has a bigger scope compared to other provinces, and our pay is the lowest. It is not fair.*
- *With the prices of commodities nowadays, salary/wages should at least increase every six months.*
- *[We need] fair workload [. . .] and wage increases because pay is not keeping up [with] workload.*

Workload

56% said that a stressful environment at work is damaging to their health (mental and/or physical), and workload concerns are a big part of that stress. Members focused on the overall short staffing (especially on night shift), as well as particular concerns regarding agency staff as well as sick calls and other absences not being replaced. As a result of workload concerns, some staff are working on their unpaid time, such as during breaks.

- *There are too many care needs of patients related to the staffing ratio. The amount of lifts [. . .] is unmanageable. There is unsafe work happening due to low staffing ratios. LPNs do not always have the time to assist with lifts but try to help when they can.*
- *Some time I need to answer work phone calls while I am taking break, or I cannot take my full break.*
- *Night staff is not enough. [T]here are only 2 staff and they still need to get up residents, [and] aside from that are the frequent callers that need to be done.*
- *Unable to take the breaks because of short staff.*
- *The remaining residents are left with their partners alone [after the short shift evening staff leave].*

63% said that agency staff are required on a regular basis which increases the workload for regular staff, and 71% said new employees and agency staff are not properly trained. 56% they were concerned that they were expected to do the work of other classifications (eg. HCAs serving food/drinks, putting away laundry, cleaning duties).

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Health and RRSP Benefits

Top concerns which members have with our health benefits include inadequate vision care and health spending account, as well as for orthodontics and physiotherapy. Members also reported that the RRSP matching is too low.

Health and Safety and Workplace Culture

Members reported concerns about how management is handling health and safety concerns, such as sick leave and WCB claims. Staff members find it intimidating, for example, to be questioned about their sick leave usage. Too often, members are being called in for meetings with management without union representation, with 53% expressing concerns about such meetings, including disciplinary meetings.

Staff also mentioned the impact on morale when people on staff are passed over in favour of external applicants for full-time positions. Some also reported having difficulty getting time off requests approved in a timely manner or being denied the opportunity to extend vacation with unpaid leaves to allow for longer overseas travel.

- *Important to avoid gossip and favoritism from management as these behaviors lead to unfair treatment among staff. A healthy work environment should promote teamwork, support, open communication and welcoming suggestions all for the benefits of our residents and the quality of care they receive.*

TAKING ACTION

The majority of respondents said that they would take various kinds of action to help us achieve our bargaining priorities. For example, members said that they would share union information, wear union buttons, sign petitions, attend rallies or even vote in favour of strike action if the employer refuses to meet our bargaining priorities.

We are especially grateful to the 22 people who agreed to act as worksite contacts to help ensure that we can communicate with members throughout the bargaining process.

NEXT STEPS

We will be meeting as the bargaining committee again soon to take what you told us in the bargaining survey and turn it into our ingoing proposals for bargaining. Then we will exchange proposals with our employer, and we will keep you posted on the details of those meetings.

If you have any questions, concerns or would like more information, please get in touch with your bargaining team!

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