



CUPE 1004 COVID-19 UPDATES

To: Local 1004 PHS Members

March 28, 2020

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Hi everyone,

First off, we wanted to take a moment and just reiterate how amazing you've all been during this public health crisis. The response of you all to the coronavirus outbreak and its effects on the residents and participants of the PHS has been truly incredible. As you all know, this isn't a static problem, nor is it the only problem the residents and participants face. The opiate overdose epidemic, the war on the poor, the criminalization of poverty and drug use, and the colonization of this land continue to weigh heavily on the folks you care for.

We have heard your concerns about the health agencies and government bodies not doing enough for the folks in our projects. There has been deep concern and worry about whether or not the response to this crisis in this community would be enough. We continue to advocate for these measures where we can as a union. But what we're doing pales in comparison to the dedicated and deeply compassionate work you have all been performing. In the absence of adequate supplies and response from external authorities, you have pressed on to inform residents, keep each other safe, and shown up for the residents and participants to keep the critical services you provide going. From all of us, thank you.

We want to thank you for the thoughtful and powerful responses the Local received to our survey this week. We were able to take the concerns you raised immediately to the monthly Labour Management Meeting with the Employer on Wednesday to ensure that your voices were heard by the PHS management. During that meeting we made a point to raise critical issues such as staffing levels, working conditions, and OH&S issues, including PPE for staff, as we navigate through the global COVID-19 pandemic. We also made sure our member's concerns around the health authorities' direction to the PHS to alter their overdose response policy were heard at the table.

During the Labour Management Meeting we also we addressed the problem of inadequate communication between the membership and the Employer. They have been fielding many questions and concerns, and we approached them with the idea of cooperatively working on information pieces. They have verbally agreed to timely responses to concerns, brought forward by the CUPE 1004 Business Agent Alex Braidek, in an effort to streamline the process for general members' concerns. We're hopeful about the possibility of getting more of the issues brought up in the survey directly to the Employer, and seeing action on the pieces there.

We know that the Employer is still working to respond on many of the issues that have arisen during this crisis. If their response seems inadequate, not thought through, or not

implemented appropriately, we want to know. You are all the experts of your programs, tell us what more needs to be done.

The Bargaining Committee has been meeting via teleconference this week to continue on with the work of melding our Collective Agreement to the provincial collective agreements with the Employer bargaining agent, the Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC). Unfortunately, the meeting that was scheduled for March 30 with the Employer and HEABC has been cancelled, but your Committee will continue to work towards a conclusion of this melding process, as swiftly as possible. A number of the responses to the survey highlighted the importance of finishing the bargaining process promptly.

We absolutely agree, and we remain eager to get back to the table. We'll continue to have conversations with the Employer this week about key pieces to move this forward.

You are all working so hard for those who need it most - reach out so that we can work for you. The Employer is expecting communications through your Business Agent, and has agreed to respond.

Please bring us your concerns, frustrations, and frothing-at-the-mouth-angry pieces so that we can bring them directly to the Employer's attention. We know that there's more that desperately needs to be done to advocate for what we need to do our job. Our working conditions are residents' living conditions.

We want to work on the issues that matter most to all of you. Contact your Stewards or us directly at kirsten.daub@cupe1004.ca.

In solidarity,
Tuesday Andrich, PHS Unit Chair
Alex Braidek, Business Agent
Andy Healey, Bargaining Committee member & Steward
Peter Hewlitt, Bargaining Committee member
Andrew Ledger, President