

Contract Proposal Development Process

The collective agreements of members who work in the worksites covered by one of the Central Table Agreements will expire on March 31, 2010. Your Central Bargaining Committee will notify the Employers of its intent to commence collective bargaining ninety days prior to March 31, 2010. Much work needs to be done before those negotiations commence and every member plays a vital role in this process.

This month's collective bargaining article will examine how the union develops its list of proposals to be exchanged with the employers and what preparation is necessary to put the union in the best possible position for bargaining.

In providing this information it is our hope that it will encourage members to take an active role in the process, including submission of proposals for the new agreements, and completing our negotiations survey.

As soon as your last contract was ratified the MAHCP started developing its proposals for the next collective agreement. One of the first things to happen after a contract is ratified is to review issues that were brought forth at the bargaining table, but not achieved. Considerations are made as to whether those issues should be prioritized for the next round of bargaining. A future bargaining file is established where those concerns can be recorded and saved to review in preparation for the next round of bargaining. Through the life of the collective agreement that file grows as new issues are identified and added to the file. Some of the reasons why an issue may be added to the file include:

- New employment issues arise that our current collective agreement language is silent on or does not favorably address for the members.
- On an ongoing basis, the Union leadership and staff examine areas of the contract that generated a lot of grievances, clauses that have been problematic for members and issues that have received unfavorable interpretations and/or determinations by arbitrators.
- Other collective agreements within the Province or nationally are monitored so that we are able to stay on top of any trends in contract language or compensation that is developing.

Most importantly, and crucial to the process is the ongoing input and support of you, the rank and file members working within the more than 160 health disciplines that

Compensation trends for large professional groupings such as Pharmacists or Laboratory Technologists are a lot easier for the Union to monitor and track than compensation trends for smaller or unique groupings of health care providers such as Tobacco Dependence Counselors or Teachers for the Hearing Impaired.

On a daily basis, we get information from members that identify issues for attention at the next bargaining session. We need to hear from you on your issues - email is a wonderful way to forward your concerns and/or research with regard to a contract issue you feel needs addressing, faxing and mailing are also good ways to let the MAHCP know your issues.

Another valuable tool that members can utilize in letting the Central Bargaining Committee know what is important for them in the next contract is our negotiations survey. That survey will be contained in the next newsletter, which will be published in June of this year. It will allow you to tell us what your priorities for bargaining are and also provide us with a wealth of data that will be invaluable at the negotiations table. Please take the time to discuss the questions, within the survey, with your work colleagues and return those surveys to the MAHCP office.

All that data as well as the issues contained within the future bargaining file will then be distilled down to a draft proposal package for bargaining.

In September, Staff Representatives will be called to a meeting to review and discuss the Draft proposals and nominate representatives to the Central Bargaining Committee. As per the MAHCP Constitution, the President, Wendy Despins is the Chair of the Central Bargaining Committee. Lee Manning, the Executive Director is also a part of the Central Bargaining Committee and serves as the Chief Negotiator. In their capacity as President and Executive Director Wendy and Lee are charged with the responsibility to appoint the Central Bargaining Committee from the names of the individuals nominated to serve. In considering the makeup of the Central Bargaining Committee there are numerous factors to be considered but crucial factors include:

- The terms of reference of the Committee which requires that 50% of the Central Bargaining Committee membership be comprised of members from the MAHCP Board of Directors.
- The experience of the individuals, as it relates to the collective bargaining process.
- The need for diversity of Committee membership with respect to the health disciplines and bargaining units we represent.

Your Central Bargaining Committee then finalizes what the proposal package will be for the central table negotiations and does all things necessary in preparation for bargaining with the employers.