

LONG-TERM BARGAINING GOALS

February 2021

NO BACKING DOWN.

CFNU/2021



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Introduction

The purpose of this policy statement is to create a national bargaining strategy, with long-term bargaining objectives that are endorsed by all CFNU member unions and supported by their respective memberships. Once ratified, each member organization is asked to respect the spirit of these objectives as part of their overall bargaining strategy always recognizing that member organizations retain total bargaining autonomy in accordance with their respective constitutions and policies.

Nurses' unions across Canada continue to battle the nursing shortage; layoffs and/or reductions in hours resulting from the deletion and/or substitution of nurses; inadequate and unsafe staffing levels; the erosion of nurses' professional authority; and workplace health and safety issues. In addition, we continue our efforts to defend and expand our federal social safety network, including a publicly funded universal health care system.

Long-Term Bargaining Objectives

A Pay and Benefits

- 1) Nurses should be paid salaries, premiums and benefits that recognize their professional status and invaluable contribution to health care. Unions should negotiate wage rates which promote retention and recruitment. Wage and benefit rollbacks are not consistent with this principal and should be rejected. Salaries and benefits should be consistent across all health care sectors so that nurses are not disadvantaged monetarily because of the sector in which they choose to work.
- 2) Notwithstanding our long term objective of complete universal publicly funded health care, provisions should be negotiated for employer paid health and welfare benefits for nurses and retirees. Such benefit plans should include the employee's right to treatment and/or services in a publicly funded facility.
- 3) In case of disciplinary or criminal charges placed against a nurse, salary benefit protection and leave of absence should be made available to them until the charges are proven or not.
- 4) Unions should negotiate provisions that ensures time spent on short or long term disability and Workers compensation should be considered pensionable service.

B Retention & Recruitment

- 1) Nurses should be enrolled in jointly trustee, defined benefit pension plans which, in addition to any government retirement benefits, provide secure, predictable and adequate retirement income.
- 2) Unions should negotiate provisions that allow nurses to work fewer hours without negatively affecting their pension benefits such as phased-in retirement concepts or individual special circumstance arrangements.
- 3) Unions should promote the employment of new graduates in supernumerary positions prior to assuming permanent employment to ensure that they have the proper fundamentals to begin a successful nursing career. Unions should negotiate contract provisions which establish and promote mentorship and preceptorship in the workplace.
- 4) Employers should provide work opportunities, equipment (e.g., electric lifts) and human resources (e.g., porters) that address the needs of nurses and will encourage them to participate in the workforce longer.
- 5) Unions should negotiate contract language which reduces the reliance on casual workforces and promotes the establishment of appropriate levels of permanent employment.
- 6) Unions should negotiate contract language that promotes a work-life balance and promotes physical and psychological well-being.
- 7) Unions should negotiate family and personal leave, child and elder care, and maternity/parental top-up provisions that make it possible for nurses to combine their home and work responsibilities.
- 8) Unions should negotiate provisions that promote portability and recognition of service and seniority.
- 9) Unions should negotiate provisions to incent nurses to start and continue rural and remote nursing, such as tuition reimbursement, travel/accommodation and remote living allowances.

C Safe Staffing & Quality Patient Care

- 1) A national moratorium be placed on any reduction of nursing hours in any sector of health care. While Canada is experiencing the highest levels of patient's acuity in all sectors, it is important that governments and employers protect, enhance and expand nursing positions to provide safe and quality patient care.

- 2) Unions should negotiate contract provisions which promote safe patient/client/resident care workloads. Unions should negotiate provisions that ensure appropriate and sufficient staff to meet the needs of patients and families, consistent with the patient/client/residents' complexity and acuity.
- 3) Unions should negotiate for appropriate safe staffing levels that minimize the need for overtime. Overtime should be strictly voluntary.
- 4) Unions should negotiate appropriate safe staffing levels that anticipate rest breaks, time off and planned and unplanned absences. Unions should negotiate contract clauses which provide for vacation relief positions and float pools to staff for leaves and vacations.
- 5) While respecting our bargaining unit integrity, Unions should negotiate provisions that ensure appropriate skill mix and scope of practice to optimize patient/resident/client outcomes.
- 6) Recognizing nurses have a leadership role in Health Care, unions should pursue all opportunities to achieve nursing input into all levels of decision-making in their workplaces

D Professional Practice Concerns

- 1) Nurses have a right to refuse to practice in violation of their professional standards. Collective agreements should recognize more decision-making autonomy for nurses.
- 2) Unions should negotiate contract provisions for joint union-management nursing advisory committees with equal management and union nurse participants at each worksite. Independent professional responsibility practice committees/panels should have jurisdiction to make binding decisions.
- 3) Unions should negotiate collective agreement provisions that promote high quality practice environments. Such measures would include a ban on situations in which the demand for care exceeds the ability to provide it (e.g. 'Hallway Nursing', the assignment of patients/residents/clients without appropriate safe staffing levels and/or their admission to inappropriate working and care environments).

E Education for Nurses

- 1) Unions should negotiate improved employer paid short and long-term education leave provisions and mandatory education programs.
- 2) Unions should negotiate collective agreement provisions that respect nurses' professional autonomy and allow individuals to direct their own professional development activities.

F Health & Safety

- 1) All employers should implement and enforce policies aimed at eliminating physical and psychological violence (bullying), abuse and harassment in the workplace for all nurses and nursing students. Contract provisions must be negotiated which recognise workplace violence as an occupational hazard and establish standards which provide enforcement mechanisms, including the grievance procedure, where the standards are breached.
- 2) Paid leave of absence provisions should be negotiated to protect nurses who are victims from domestic violence.
- 3) Nurses lose more time away from work because of avoidable illnesses and injuries than any other occupation. Unions should negotiate clauses which promote both physical and psychological health and safety, including appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), safety engineered devices and training.
- 4) Unions should negotiate collaborative return to work programs that gradually and safely return nurses to work. Unions should negotiate contract language which provides clauses to enforce duty to accommodate provisions for disabled nurses, which includes nurses suffering from mental illnesses, including but not being limited to, PTSD and addictions.
- 5) Unions should negotiate provisions that ensure meaningful participation in emergency and pandemic planning while protecting the integrity of our collective agreements, including mandatory consultation in regards to protocols and procedures that impact the health and safety of nurses caring for patients with communicable diseases, and establishing a fund to ensure that nurses experience no loss of income – e.g., for self-isolation.
- 6) Comprehensive influenza prevention/vaccination strategies should be negotiated.

G Union Security

- 1) Unions should negotiate contract provisions for adequate and accessible employer paid union leave, with same classification replacements (replace like with like) to ensure that nurses' rights can be adequately protected.
- 2) Nurses have a vital role in patient and public advocacy. Unions should negotiate provisions that protect whistle blowers and promote the culture of safety.
- 3) Unions should negotiate contract provisions that promote, protect and respect bargaining unit integrity across Canada.
- 4) Unions should negotiate contract provisions that promote a positive image for the union and ensure its growth, survival, importance and relevance to members.

- 5) Union security provisions should include mandatory dues deduction and remittance based on the “Rand formula”.

H Diversity in Areas of Work

- 1) Unions should negotiate collective agreement language which respect diversity and employment equity and provide education/awareness on how to build a work culture of inclusiveness.
- 2) Unions should negotiate provisions that protect human rights and promote equity issues, with the overall objective of eliminating all forms of inequity, racism and discrimination in our areas of work.

I Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

- 1) Unions should negotiate the promotion of the principles and recommendations in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action.

Approved June 6, 2003 at the 11th Biennial Convention

Reviewed February 5, 2021