



## **Health Sciences Calls for Independent, Binding Arbitration of Contract Dispute**

**Regina (April 27, 2011)** - The Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan, the union which represents more than three-thousand specialized health care professionals, today called on Premier Wall to agree to submit the union's lengthy contract dispute with health care employers to independent, binding arbitration.

"After more than two years without a contract and no indication health care employers are ready or able to negotiate a fair and reasonable settlement, we believe independent, binding arbitration is the best option to prevent job action. We call on Brad Wall to act now to introduce independent, binding arbitration of our contract dispute," Health Sciences President Cathy Dickson said.

"At the bargaining table yesterday, Health Sciences presented its fourth new contract proposal in the past four months to try to jumpstart negotiations, but health care employers, represented by SAHO (Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations), rejected our proposal, admitted they had no authority to negotiate its terms, and refused to even discuss it," Dickson said.

"Health care employers wasted tens of thousands of taxpayers' dollars in recent weeks, claiming they wanted to bargain. However, these same employers met face-to-face with us for less than an hour yesterday, admitted they didn't have the authority to negotiate the terms of our new contract proposal, and cancelled the remainder of the bargaining sessions planned for this week. Enough is enough," Dickson said.

"Even more shocking was how SAHO reacted when we reminded them of the comments in the Legislature recently by Health Minister McMorris. On March 16<sup>th</sup>, the Minister told the people of Saskatchewan the Wall government would make Health Sciences a contract offer that would be 'competitive' with Alberta saying: *"We haven't met every wage in Alberta...but I can tell you it's fair and competitive...if we're not number one, we may be number two, but not far behind number one."* When we noted this commitment at the bargaining table, SAHO pretended not to be aware of it and then dismissed it saying the Minister was not at the table and added "we don't know where the Minister gets his information"!

"If the Wall government is not going to give health care employers a mandate to negotiate a fair and reasonable contract offer, the Premier needs to show some respect for health care professionals and agree to independent, third-party binding arbitration of this dispute. In other provinces where a union's right to job action is limited by essential services legislation there is always an independent resolution process, like third-party binding arbitration, but not in Saskatchewan," Dickson explained.

"The Premier shouldn't hide behind the claim that he needs legislative changes to make this decision. The government can simply instruct health care employers to agree. We already agree. Let's get on with the job. It's the best option for Saskatchewan's specialized health care professionals and Saskatchewan people," Dickson concluded.

### **For Further Information Contact:**

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