

TOWARDS A NEW COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

The round of consultations in general membership meetings of unions affiliated with the Fédération de la santé et des services sociaux (FSSS-CSN) resulted in the adoption of the agreement in principle reached on March 8 last, an agreement in principle that was recommended by FSSS-CSN delegates at a Federal Council meeting on March 10-11, 2016.

In recent weeks, unions in the FSSS-CSN public sector representing 110,000 workers voted to adopt the enhanced agreement in principle reached with the Couillard government in March.¹ Although all the other union organizations in health and social services settled back in December 2015, the FSSS-CSN continue to negotiate until it obtained an agreement in principle that included an extra \$80 million.

“This round of collective bargaining certainly did not solve all the problems in the health and social services system. Our determination did, however, enable us to make gains over the December agreement in principle as well as in our struggle for a better distribution of wealth. And this is a struggle that must continue!” Jeff Begley, FSSS-CSN president.

Discussions on the texts to be signed

With the agreement in principle now adopted, discussions are under way on the actual wording of the new national collective agreement. This is an important stage in negotiations, because at the end of this process we will be able to sign the texts and have the new collective agreement come into force. So the FSSS-CSN bargaining team is making sure that the wording of the national collective agreement complies with what was agreed upon in the agreement in principle initialled by the parties.

1. By April 22, 2016, when the consultation ended, more than 90% of unions had held their general membership meetings and voted on the agreement in principle by secret ballot. Of these, close to 90% voted in favour. These unions represent 80% of members in the FSSS public sector. Detailed results will be provided at the Federation's next regular decision-making meeting.

Although the work continues, it is still too soon to say when the national collective agreement will be signed. We will keep you informed of where the work is at as quickly as possible.

Answering your questions

With the adoption of the agreement in principle, many workers have questions.

Some are wondering, for instance, when they can expect to receive the lump sum for 2015, the increase in pay for 2016 and the amounts of the premiums in the new national collective agreement, notably the ones for which the enhanced agreement in principle provides for substantial retroactive pay – namely the premiums for employees working with clients presenting serious behavioural disorders, those working with clients in CHSLDs and those working in the Far North, as well as the premium paid to psychologists.

Once the national collective agreement is signed, we will also agree with the employer party on when these amounts will be paid. You will be informed as soon as possible.

The age of retirement will go up to 61 as of July 2019. However, workers who have accumulated 30 years of service will be able to leave the work world at 60 years of age without an actuarial penalty. And any person who has accumulated 35 years of service, regardless of their age, can retire without any penalty.

The FSSS-CSN bargaining team is working relentlessly to reach agreement as soon as possible on a national collective agreement that complies with the agreement in principle.