

CENTRAL TABLE BARGAINING

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When was my collective agreement up?

Most central table contracts that MAHCP administers expired March 31, 2018, with the exception of some CUPE and MGEU agreements that expired in 2017.

If we are negotiating a new contract, do I still have a valid contract?

Yes. You are covered under your current contract, even if it is with a different union, until a new one is signed.

What is the current status of bargaining?

MAHCP began negotiations with the Provincial Health Labour Relations Services (PHLRS), the employer's bargaining body, in March 2022 and have been meeting weekly since, with some exceptions. Further bargaining dates are currently scheduled through August, with more to follow.

We had served the employer with our notice to bargain six months prior to the end of our contract, in 2017. However, due to the implementation of the government's Bill 29 (representation votes) and the pandemic, the employer delayed the central table bargaining cycle for all unions. MAHCP typically follows MNU and the support sectors in bargaining, as their contracts expire before ours.

What is the status of my proposal and what is the employer proposing?

We do not share the status of proposals during negotiations. The reason for this is simply neither side wants to 'tip their hand' to the other side. Negotiations can be delicate and each side does not want to reveal what their ultimate goals are or what their deal-breakers are.

If these are disclosed to membership this info may get back to management and can disadvantage us in our negotiations. It is understandably frustrating to members, but it is to our collective advantage to keep our ultimate objectives close to the chest.

Also, members should know that even Executive Council members not on the negotiating committee do not get extra information about negotiations. Negotiators have to sign confidentiality agreements – general updates (bargaining dates, broad themes, etc.) are provided on a regular basis.

How long will bargaining take?

We don't know, but we are unlikely to reach an agreement in the next few months. The Manitoba Government stated in their recent Budget announcement (in April 2022) that they are aiming to have all public-sector bargaining concluded by the end of this fiscal year, which would be March 31, 2023. We are hopeful that we will reach an agreement by then but we can't predict an end date.

For further context, the nurses began their recent round of bargaining in October 2020 and finally ratified new agreements one year later in October 2021 following seven weeks of mediation. Allied health is the most complex sector.

What happens during negotiations?

Check out our bargaining flow chart [here](#).

Proposals are put forth by both the union and employer. Each negotiating side reviews the other's proposals, goes back to their respective committee and discusses how they will reply to the other side's proposals (i.e., whether they will accept the proposals, offer amendments, or reject them). With each meeting held, each side will offer a revised reply to the other side's proposals.

The meetings are usually a full day and each successive meeting is booked sometimes a week or several weeks later.

Non-monetary proposals are dealt with first and agreed upon, and then monetary proposals are dealt with (i.e., wages and benefits). Once the monetary proposals have been discussed and there is no more movement on these issues, a final offer is presented to take to our membership for approval or rejection.

The union will usually indicate if they are recommending approval or rejection of the offer. The membership then votes for or against the new proposed collective agreement.

If negotiations reach an impasse, the bargaining committee has options depending on a number of variables. This could include mediation, arbitration or even a strike vote/job action. Your Central Table negotiating team will be integral in choosing how we proceed.

Am I obligated to accept the recommendations of the bargaining committee?

No, you are not obligated to accept the recommendations of the bargaining committee.

If we get a four-year agreement as we have in the past, it will already be expired when it's ratified. Are we looking at negotiating a longer agreement like the nurses did?

That will be up to the bargaining committee. It may be advantageous to negotiate a longer agreement

if the employer is prepared to offer a fair deal for those additional years. If not, then a shorter duration may be better and then we would be pushing for a fresh round of negotiations.

Do I get retroactive pay once we have a new agreement?

Retroactive pay, along with any wage increases, must be negotiated.

What is Central Table Bargaining?

Central table bargaining involves a group of sites and contracts being negotiated simultaneously at a single negotiation session. For MAHCP, it refers to all employers/sites that fall under the new Shared Health, WRHA and NRHA bargaining units.

The regulation defining the Shared Health and WRHA bargaining units, and which employers fall under each unit, can be found here. For example, CancerCare is included in the Shared Health bargaining unit and Klinik falls under WRHA, even though they remain distinct employers.

How is the Central Table Bargaining Committee chosen?

The negotiating team is comprised of interested members who apply to sit on the committee. The bargaining committee is drawn from Executive Council and the membership at large, representing a diverse group of occupations, regions and experience.

When are we taking a strike vote?

A strike mandate is an important tool for the bargaining committee, if and when they choose to use it. Nurses represented by MNU and support staff represented by CUPE voted in favour of strike action last year.

It's important to note that both MNU and CUPE were each at the bargaining table for about eight months before their bargaining committees chose to hold strike votes.

MAHCP began central table bargaining in March and the committee will call a strike vote if and when

it is deemed advantageous to achieve our aims at the table.

If a strike vote is called, the bargaining committee will be expecting a strong strike mandate to provide leverage at the bargaining table. MNU and CUPE both received strong mandates last year (98%-99%).

What do I have to do during a strike?

In the event of a strike, your manager will be scheduling people to work under an Essential Services Agreement. If you are not scheduled to work, walking the picket line to accumulate picket hours would be beneficial.

What does the Essential Services Agreement mean and what does it cover?

The Essential Services Agreement is typically negotiated prior to the beginning of bargaining and refers to employees who are considered essential and must report for work as scheduled. The number of employees deemed essential can vary greatly from department to department and from facility to facility.

How much do I get paid during a strike?

To obtain strike pay you must volunteer to work on the picket line or with other strike-related duties.

Strike Pay will be \$50/day; members must complete at least 4 hours of picketing or other authorized duties supporting the strike that day to be eligible. Strike pay is only available to those members who are not working that day due to essential services agreements.

Strike Pay will commence on the member's third day of picketing or other authorized duties. MAHCP will not collect dues on Strike Pay. Strike Pay is not taxable.

How long can a strike last?

The length of a strike can vary greatly. Once a strike action is initiated, the strike will continue until outstanding issues are settled. The government could also legislate all striking employees back to work.

The employer or union can apply to the Labour Board to settle the provisions of a new collective agreement through binding arbitration by applying to the board in writing.


They can only do so if:


- At least 60 days have elapsed since the strike or lockout has commenced.
- The parties have attempted to conclude a new Collective Agreement with the assistance of a conciliation officer or mediator for at least 30 days during the period of the strike or lockout.
- The parties have not concluded a new Collective Agreement.

What can I do to help during negotiations?

Stay informed and stay engaged. Respond to calls to action from our union (e.g., information pickets, rallies, advocacy campaigns). Make sure we have contact details for you and your coworkers so you can stay up to date on crucial information. If your coworkers aren't getting our emails, they can update their contact information here or email info@mahcp.ca.

 info@mahcp.ca

 204-772-0425
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