



# CENTRAL TABLE BARGAINING

## Frequently Asked Questions

### *When was my collective agreement up?*

Most central table contracts that MAHCP administers were up on April 1, 2018, with the exception of some CUPE and MGEU agreements that ended 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, meeting weekly with the employer, with an additional internal committee day each week.

In January 2023 the Bargaining Committee began meeting with the employer twice weekly and has proposed adding a third day every week.

As of April 1, 2023, five years after the majority of our contracts were up and after 137 days of work for the Bargaining Committee, we are still in non-monetary negotiations.

Bargaining is still moving too slowly. The Bargaining Committee has called on membership for a strike mandate to send a strong message to the employer and government and get the process moving faster.

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

We do not share the status of proposals during the negotiation process which must, by its nature, remain confidential.

Negotiations are always delicate and neither side wants to reveal their ultimate goals or their deal-breakers. For that reason we can't discuss them in public, or even privately beyond the bargaining table. If we do, this information may get back to management and disadvantage us at the table.


All Bargaining Committee members must sign confidentiality agreements. Only general updates (bargaining dates, broad themes, etc.) can be provided to members on a regular basis. This can be understandably frustrating to members, but it is to our collective advantage to keep negotiations confidential.


### *How long will bargaining take?*

The Bargaining Committee is still in non-monetary negotiations as of April 1, 2023. Once we enter monetary negotiations, it could still take several months to reach a deal and may require mediation, conciliation or arbitration. See the [Bargaining Flow Chart](#) for further information.

The Manitoba Government stated in last year's budget (April 2022) that they wanted to conclude all public-sector bargaining by the end of March 2023. Unfortunately That deadline has passed and we are still bargaining. Neither the government nor the employer has made a new contract for allied health a priority. The Bargaining Committee has called for a strong strike mandate to try to change that.

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## *What happens during negotiations?*

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. Meetings are usually a full day and are booked several weeks in advance.

Generally, non-monetary proposals are dealt with first and agreed upon, and then monetary proposals are dealt with (i.e., wages and benefits). The goal of the Bargaining Committee is to bring a tentative agreement to the membership for a vote.

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 or job action.

## *Am I obligated to accept the recommendation of the Bargaining Committee?*

No, you are not obligated to accept the recommendation of the bargaining committee. In a ratification vote, every member decides for themselves how they will vote in a secret ballot.

## *Are we looking at negotiating a longer agreement like the other health-care sectors 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 push 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 for active and non-active (i.e., retired or otherwise severed) members. Retro pay has been included in contracts for all other health-care unions so far.

## *What is the "Central Table"?*

Central table bargaining involves a group of bargaining units 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. A total of 50 separate collective agreements are being combined into the new Shared Health and WRHA contracts, which has greatly complicated this bargaining round.

The regulation defining the Shared Health and Winnipeg Region Employers Organizations or bargaining units, and which separate employers fall under each unit, can be found [here](#) on page 3.

For example, CancerCare is included in the Shared Health Employer Organization and Klinik falls under the Winnipeg Region Employers Organization, even though they remain distinct employers.

## *How was 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, backgrounds and experience.

## *What can I do to help during negotiations?*

Stay informed and stay engaged. Respond to calls to action from our union (e.g., strike vote, 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](mailto:info@mahcp.ca).

## *When are we taking a strike vote?*

The Strike Vote was held April 11-13. The Bargaining Committee called membership to give them a strong strike mandate. For more information please see the [Strike Vote FAQ](#) and sign in to the [Member Portal](#).

## *What happens after the strike vote?*

A strike mandate does not mean a strike will definitely happen.

After a successful strike vote, the Bargaining Committee returns to the bargaining table with more power and leverage to negotiate a good deal.

We anticipate that the next vote will be for ratification once we have reached an agreement. If members vote that deal down, then the strike mandate will empower the bargaining committee to call a strike if needed.

### *Can I get in trouble for going on strike?*

No. In Canada, your right to participate in legal strike action is protected under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The employer may not discriminate against or penalize you for doing so.

### *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, you can perform picket duties to earn strike pay, which is \$50/day to a maximum of \$250/week.

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

The Essential Services Agreement (ESA) is negotiated between the employer and union. It designates employees and work functions that are considered "essential" under provincial legislation and must be maintained during job action. In the unlikely event of a strike, if you are scheduled to work under the ESA, you would report to work as per the ESA. 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?*

If you are scheduled to work under an ESA you will be paid as normal for hours worked, and normal union dues (1.25% of gross) will continue to be deducted from your pay cheque. There is no further levy or extra dues deducted for members working under essential services.

### *If you are NOT working an ESA shift but would normally be working, then you are eligible for Strike Pay?*

As per MAHCP policy, Strike Pay is \$50/day, max. \$250/week; members must complete at least four (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 is NOT available to members who picket before or after their shift. Strike Pay is NOT available to members who are not routinely scheduled to work during that picketing day.

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.

### *What would happen to my booked vacation during a strike?*

That will be determined by the Essential Services Agreement.

### *What would happen to my health benefits if we go on strike?*

As it stands currently, it is our understanding that nothing should change regarding your benefits during a potential strike.

### *How long can a strike last?*

The length of a strike can vary greatly. If a strike action is initiated, the strike would continue until outstanding issues are settled or until 60 days have elapsed. 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 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.

In the event of a strike, what happens if I'm on pre-retirement salary continuance or other approved leave such as WCB, MPI, maternity, etc.

As it stands currently, it is our understanding that all wages and benefits should be maintained during a strike, including maternity leave top-up.

You may participate in union picket duties while on leave and are encouraged to do so, but you would not be eligible for strike pay if you are still receiving compensation through the employer.

