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June 14, 2018

Attention: All Members
CUPE Local 873

Dear Members;

As most of you are aware, in 2014 during the bargaining process, the Employer indicated to the Union their desire to make changes to the frontline supervisory structure. This notice came in the form of an estoppel letter, which means it is legally binding on the parties. The estoppel read, in part:

“To implement changes in management and supervisory structures, any agreements or part thereof that expressly or by implication restricts or limits the authority of BCEHS to establish an appropriate supervisory structure of excluded and included personnel contained or included by reference within the BCEHS/CUPE Appendix to the Health Services and Support Facilities Subsector Collective Agreement is terminated effective March 31, 2014.”

Read the historical documents here: <https://goo.gl/ccVqiR>

Since 2014, the Employer has consulted with the Union (as stipulated in the estoppel letter) about the frontline supervisory structure, however no significant changes were ever implemented after any of these discussions. Recently, the Employer requested a meeting with the Union to revisit the possibility of changes. During the meeting, the Employer indicated that they were ready to make changes to the supervisory structure that would specifically affect both Unit Chiefs and Duty Supervisors. While there are still more discussions to be had, the Employer has stated that they intend to eliminate the Duty Supervisor program as we know it today. Their plan also removes some unit chiefs from on-car positions and into a primarily administrative role. We have not been given an exact timeline or complete implementation strategy at this point. The Employer has made it clear they do not view any of the changes they plan to make as being outside of the Collective Agreement and as such are not seeking agreement from the Union – only input and feedback.

If the Employer proceeds with the changes as they have indicated, an agreement on an adjustment plan for existing staff that would be affected would need to be reached as stated in the letter from 2014. The Employer has confirmed their commitment to the below protections for affected employees:

“Any current supervisory employee who is assigned to a lower classification as a result of any reorganization of the management and supervisory structure of BCEHS will be grandparented at the employee’s current salary. Affected supervisory employees will retain bidding rights under Article 13.03(c). There shall be no forced relocation of affected employees.”

We understand that a change of this magnitude can be stressful, and the yet to be defined components of this change leave unanswered questions for many. We would like to acknowledge all of our members who have served and who are currently serving in the role of frontline supervisors. Duty supervisors have provided invaluable support to our members and play a significant role in many areas of our province. When informed of these changes, we raised a number of concerns. Of those, one of the most significant is the discrepancy in job description between a unit chief and a duty supervisor. Duty supervisors perform duties, namely frontline operational supervision, not captured by the current job description of unit chiefs as outlined in policy. We have made it abundantly clear that simply downloading the work of a duty supervisor to a unit chief at a unit chief rate of pay is not acceptable and would be considered a violation of our Collective Agreement language and would be dealt with accordingly. We have also asked for the Employers’ plans pertaining to other ‘four stripe’ supervisor positions in dispatch and special operations. We expect to have further information on those positions very soon.

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We understand that this information will generate an abundance of questions, comments and concerns. We will do our best to address all member correspondence, however as this change is being implemented at the discretion of the Employer, members may want to also address the Employer directly with inquiries.

We have more meetings scheduled with the Employer next week to continue discussions on this topic. It is important that affected members do not make any quick decisions about career changes. More information will be available soon, which will help guide each members' individual choice on how to transition. We will continue to provide updates as we receive more information and will work closely with all members directly affected by this change.

Sincerely,

Provincial Executive Committee
Ambulance Paramedics & Emergency Dispatchers of BC
CUPE Local 873

CE/sd/MoveUp

