

January 18, 2010

Report from the President

CUPE Local 1287 Benefits Review

Brothers and Sisters,

I wanted to give you an update on an issue that I feel is going to be of great importance in our next round of bargaining, your benefits.

By benefits I mean specifically, Life Insurance, Long Term Disability, Health (including drugs) and Dental. That doesn't mean our other benefits aren't important, and we will bargain hard to retain or improve those benefits but the above mentioned benefits are provided by insurance companies. The employer has been using that as an excuse, not to give us information about our benefits.

Benefits can be complicated and we retained with your approval a CUPE recommended consultant to help us review the benefits. So far, The Region has refused to give us information that our consultant requested, even though it would allow us make sure we are getting bang for our buck.

The information we have requested is basic and other employer's across the province provide, so why won't the Region of Niagara? At a recent meeting with the Region they explained that it was the insurer's fault that they couldn't provide information like the contract or claims history. When pressed they promised to provide the information from now on, moving forward. We'll hold them to that and keep you updated on our progress.

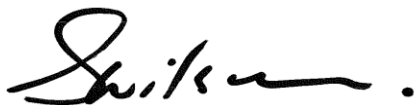
They also signaled that they thought cost containment would be a high priority moving forward. Needless to say this worries me greatly.

Benefits across the country are under attack by employers, increasing deductibles and co-pays reducing benefits and allowing folks to opt out, thereby increasing the costs for our most needy members and taking huge personal risk. How can anyone know when they will need their benefits most? It's why we all need them!

We will continue to press them to get the information as we have the right to, as well as reinforcing how important our group benefits are to all our members. Although we all have unique situations, it's by banding together that we get the best benefits possible.

Look for more information on this important topic in the coming months and as always I invite your comments.

Yours in Solidarity.



Shawn Wilson
President, CUPE Local 1287

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