

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND FIRST VICE- PRESIDENT/TREASURER

Once again, we'd like to express our sincerest thanks to all Public Health Ontario staff, whose hard work and heroic efforts have kept our labs running, and our province safe during the COVID-19 crisis, and long before it too.

You have shouldered a huge responsibility and burden during this crisis, and you've done it with dignity; we couldn't be more proud.

You deserve to be rewarded for your efforts, not held back by Bill 124 and its unconstitutional wage cap; it's why we've launched a Charter challenge to fight it. But despite this legislation and its chilling effect on the bargaining climate, the bargaining team is working hard to achieve a good contract.

It's been a tough round of bargaining, but with this team, we have all the confidence in the world. And with the ongoing support and solidarity of members, and the strength of our union, there's no doubt that they will be primed for success as they prepare for Interest Arbitration.

In these challenging times, our solidarity matters more than ever. Rest assured, you will continue to have every resource available from OPSEU/SEFPO, every step of the way.

In Solidarity,



Warren (Smokey) Thomas
OPSEU/SEFPO President

Eduardo (Eddy) Almeida
OPSEU/SEFPO First Vice-
President/Treasurer



MESSAGE FROM THE BARGAINING TEAM CHAIR

With the fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic upon us, we thank you, once again, for your ongoing dedication and resilience under such immense pressure.

Your work has been the foundation of Ontario's entire pandemic response – so bravo!

At the bargaining table, your team's top priority has been to address your concerns and interests; to achieve the fairness and respect that you deserve. And while we've faced some tough decisions during this round of bargaining, we won't back down.

We have appreciated all your support and solidarity throughout this process, including your support with the lanyard campaign – so thank you, from the bottom of our hearts. As we prepare for Interest Arbitration, your support will continue to empower our efforts.

And thank you to every member for your hard work during these trying times. You deserve better from this employer, and we'll keep fighting to achieve it.

In Solidarity,

Omid Nouri
Bargaining Team Chair



BILL 124

EXEMPTION REQUEST UPDATE

In our April bargaining bulletin, we reported that OPSEU/SEFPO had written to the President of the Treasury Board Secretariat seeking an exemption from Bill 124, which limits public sector compensation increases to one per cent per year.

We know that all our members have been working tirelessly throughout this pandemic, helping keep Ontarians safe. This is the message we sent to the Treasury Board asking for an exemption and to recognize your hard work. Unfortunately, after a long wait, we have now heard back from the Treasury Board, and they have denied our request and confirmed that Bill 124 will apply to all PHO employees.

This was not the result we were hoping for, but your bargaining team headed into conciliation with the employer looking to reach a settlement.

BARGAINING UPDATE

On August 12, we met with the employer and a Conciliation Officer who was appointed by the Ministry of Labour to assist both sides, to reach an agreement. After much discussion that day, the parties agreed to a second day of conciliation on August 24. Your bargaining team came to the meeting on August 24 fully prepared to reach a settlement in accordance with the demands our members asked us to be addressed, and within the constraints imposed by Bill 124.

Unfortunately, the parties were not able to reach a deal. Your bargaining team felt that the employer did not address enough of our primary concerns and were not prepared to meet our demands on several key items, including benefits, shift premiums, wage parity, and claims for related experience for our members who have not had the opportunity to submit a claim on previous experience, based on the previous Interest Arbitration Award.

A No Board Report was requested from the Conciliator, which will move the items in dispute forward to Interest Arbitration to be ruled on by an Interest Arbitrator.

Your bargaining team would like to thank all members for their support throughout the process and for members taking part in the various lanyard campaign events throughout the province. It is truly appreciated.

The bargaining team will now start to prepare for arbitration, and we will send another bargaining update once details of the arbitration date become available.

In Solidarity,

Your Bargaining Team

Omid Nouri

Local 545 (Toronto)
Bargaining Team Chair
omidnouri301@yahoo.com

Selfa Pyentam

Local 113 (London)
selbarry@yahoo.com

Casey McGuire

Bargaining Team Vice-Chair
Local 412 (Ottawa)
kc.mcguire1374@gmail.com

Raul Chicas

Local 545 (Toronto)
raulchicas@gmail.com

Shah Nawaz

Local 545 (Toronto)
shahnawaz.l@gmail.com

