



PARO

Inspired by our
love of medicine

Arbitration Decision

I am very pleased to be able to tell you that we have received the decision of Mr. William Kaplan, the sole Arbitrator in the hearing held last week to re-open our contract negotiations for 2020-2023.

Background

Our members, like many other public sector workers, were subject to the Government's Bill 124 which imposed a cap of a 1% increase in wages per year for the period July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2023. We strongly believed that Bill 124 was unconstitutional and so we negotiated a clause in our contract that would allow us to re-open our negotiations for that period should the courts agree.

Our legal team played an important role in the successful court challenge that determined that Bill 124 was in fact in violation of the Constitution. This set the stage for us to re-open our negotiations and in June we met with our employer to see if we could reach a voluntary settlement. The Government did not provide our employer with a mandate to negotiate and so we moved to a process called binding arbitration. Both sides presented their case to a sole arbitrator last Wednesday September 6th, 2023 and it is the binding decision of Mr. Kaplan that I am excited to share with you in this message.

Salary Increases

Mr. Kaplan decided that over and above the 1% increase that our members received in each of the three years of the 2020-2023 Collective Agreement, that we should receive:

- an additional 0.75% for July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021;
- an additional 2.0% for July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022; and
- an additional 3.75% for July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

These increases are to be paid retroactively to all our members who were employed as a resident during the specified time period.

In addition to the increases awarded by Mr. Kaplan for all PGY levels, he also **awarded additional specific targeted increases to PGY1, PGY7 and PGY8** pay levels that come into effect September 14, 2023.

Mr. Kaplan decided that these general increases **also apply** to the Chief and Senior Administrative bonuses.

Call Stipend Increases

Effective yesterday (for calls worked yesterday and dates worked going forward), Mr. Kaplan awarded an increase in call-stipends as follows:

- in-hospital weekday and converted home weekday call stipends will **increase to \$161.86**
- in-hospital weekend and converted home weekend call stipends will **increase to \$198.49**
- home weekday and qualifying weekday call stipends to **increase to \$80.93**
- home weekend and qualifying weekend call stipends to **increase to \$99.24**

The new call stipend rates come into effect as of September 14th, 2020, however they are not subject to retroactive pay. In the last round of negotiations, we were able to increase call stipends by 4%. **The decision by Mr. Kaplan has increased weekday stipends by a further 22% and weekend stipends by a further 36%.**

Benefits

Effective November 13th, 2023 (60 days from the date of the Award) our **Vision Care will increase from \$375 to \$450** every 24 months and our **paramedical coverage for mental health, including psychotherapists will double from \$1000 to \$2000.**

Professional Association of Residents of Ontario



These increases **are on top of** the following increases that we previously obtained in the 2020-23 negotiations under Bill 124:

- Effective July 1st, 2021: Increase mental health coverage from \$500 to \$1000 yearly (and includes coverage for psychotherapists)
- Effective July 1st, 2022: Amend Extended Health Care Benefits to include coverage for prescribed birth control including IUDs
- Effective July 1st, 2022: Amend Extended Health Care Benefits to include coverage for Breast Pumps
- Effective July 1st, 2022: Increase Vision Care Coverage from \$300 to \$375
- Effective July 1st, 2022: Increase Massage Therapy Coverage from \$500 to \$650 yearly

We have always known how vital residents are to the health care system in Ontario, but this was brought into stark relief during the pandemic and continues to be an ever-present reality with the current strain that our system faces.

Arbitrators take a multitude of factors into consideration when making their decisions, but it is important to know that even they operate within a system of constraints. We worked hard to present a compelling case **underscoring the value each of you bring** to the workplace every day.

We have an excellent working relationship with our employer, and we know they appreciate the work that residents perform. Nevertheless, they must operate within the mandate that the government gives them when they negotiate with us. This was a challenging process as the **employer argued that we should receive no more than the 0.75%, 1% and 2% increases that the nurses received in their re-opener.**

We are very pleased that **Mr. Kaplan understood our arguments and awarded significantly higher increases (.75%, 2% and 3.75%) as well as providing double digit percentage increases to the call stipend rates and awarding increases to the Chief and Senior Administrative Bonuses as well as our vision and mental health care benefits.**

Summary Information

We have created a page on our website that contains detailed information on the impact of this decision as well as a link to Mr. Kaplan's decision. If you are wondering how much retroactive pay you are entitled to, we have created an easy to use calculator. Please keep in mind that you will also be entitled to retroactive pay on the new rate from July 1, 2023 until the date that your payroll centre implements the new pay rates.

Next Steps

Next week we will begin working with the payroll centres to ensure that the changes outlined in Mr. Kaplan's Award are implemented. We will work to contact all our previous members who are no longer residents but who are entitled to retroactive pay. If you know someone who was a resident in Ontario between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2023 and who has finished their training, encourage them to contact their payroll centre and provide their current banking information.

As this is a significant Award dating back to 2020, it is going to take time for the payroll centres to do all the necessary calculations, so please be patient. We are confident that they will process this as quickly as possible but rest assured that we will be monitoring their progress.

This result would not have been possible without the work of your last three PARO Boards of Directors as well as the tireless work of our dedicated and skilled professional PARO Staff. We are also very grateful to our legal team, Mr. Steven Barrett and Ms. Nadine Blum of Goldblatt Partners LLP, who are second to none.

Finally, now that we have a decision related to the 2020-2023 Re-opener, we are able to proceed with our negotiations for our next Collective Agreement for the term beginning July 1, 2023. As has been outlined in previous messages, we will rely heavily on the input of our General Council and the input of our members through the negotiations survey that we conducted last spring in determining our negotiating priorities.

Warm regards,

Dr. Brendan Lew, MD, MPH, CCFP, FRCPC
Past President and Chair PARO Negotiations Team

Professional Association of Residents of Ontario