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September 24, 2024

Dear Member:

Your PARO Negotiations Team has been working hard on your behalf and we are writing to provide an important update on our ongoing negotiations process. This includes letting you know that we were able to achieve important work hour changes through our negotiations and mediation with the Ontario Teaching Hospitals.

As many of you may know, our Agreement governing the framework of bargaining and arbitration does not allow for work hour issues to be resolved through arbitration so any changes that we achieve must be agreed to by both parties and cannot be imposed. As set out below, we were able to negotiate some key work hour improvements.

However, we were unable to reach a negotiated settlement on the monetary issues. This was despite making progress over three intensive mediation sessions, including reaching agreement on several issues, including work hours changes.

As a result, PARO and the hospitals proceeded to arbitration on the disputed monetary issues before Mr. Eli Gedalof (one of the most respected labour mediators and arbitrators in Ontario).

We have now received his binding arbitration decision, which includes the changes that had been agreed to during the negotiation and mediation process, as well as his decision on monetary items and the length of the Collective Agreement.

Highlights of the Award

We were awarded a **three-year contract**, from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2026.

SALARY INCREASES

Salaries will increase by the following amounts:

- Retroactive to July 1, 2023: **3.5% increase**
- Retroactive to July 1, 2024: **additional 3.0% increase**
- Effective July 1, 2025: **additional 2.65% increase**

CALL STIPENDS

We were also able to obtain significant increases to Call Stipends, which will increase by the following amounts:

- Retroactive to July 1, 2023:
  - weekday stipends **increase by 5.85%**
  - weekend stipends **increase by 11.70%**
- Retroactive to July 1, 2024:
  - weekday stipends **increase by 3.30%**
  - weekend stipends **increase by 6.60%**

- Effective July 1, 2025:
  - weekday stipends **increase by 2.25%**
  - weekend stipends **increase by 4.50%**

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CHIEF & SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE BONUS

- Retroactive to July 1, 2023: **3.5% increase**
- Retroactive to July 1, 2024: **additional 3.0% increase**
- Effective July 1, 2025: **additional 2.65% increase**

EXTENDED HEALTHCARE BENEFIT IMPROVEMENTS

- Retroactive to July 1, 2024: Increase in mental health coverage (including psychotherapy) to a **maximum of $3000.00 yearly** from a previous maximum of $2000.00 (a 50% increase).
- Effective July 1, 2025, introduction of **a $250 yearly health spending account**, with one year carry over.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS that we reached agreement on through negotiations and mediation, that will form part of the new Collective Agreement, include the following:

Removal of Home After Handover Exception

- We are very pleased that the hospitals have agreed that, no later than October 1, 2025, the exception clause regarding home after handover will **cease to exist** in the Agreement. For historical reasons, this exception provision permitting dismissal from duties on call at noon applied solely to the University of Toronto Department of Surgery. It has been a priority in many past rounds of negotiations to remove this clause and we have now finally succeeded in achieving this change towards equity for all residents. **No later than October 1, 2025**, all services in the province must comply with the home after handover language relevant to their service (Article 16.4).

Improvement to Handover Definition

- We have also negotiated changes to improve the existing handover language, primarily a provision making it clear that a resident handing over will not be required to complete tasks that can reasonably be performed by the incoming resident. Specifically, the new clause specifies that, ***"handover of patient care responsibilities is restricted to responsibilities which are reasonably necessary to ensure appropriate clinical handover (including completion of sign-out notes, follow up on ordered investigations, and/or review/rounding with incoming team members to ensure appropriate transfer of care), but the Resident performing the handover shall not be required to complete tasks that can reasonably be performed by the incoming resident (consistent with CPSO requirements), and no new patient responsibilities will be assigned."***

Weekend Call Scheduling – In-hospital Call

- Many in-hospital services throughout the province strive to ensure that residents are not on-call on back-to-back weekends; however, this hasn't been uniformly applied. We were able to enshrine a new standard in the contract providing that, **"a resident shall normally not be required to be on call in-hospital for two consecutive weekends within the same block or within consecutive blocks within the same service, except where required to meet patient care responsibilities".** The requirement that residents **shall not be scheduled** for consecutive weekends on home call remains in place.

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Call Room Access to Internet & Computer Equipment

- We negotiated changes to require that on-call facilities will now include **access to internet (through wifi or hard-wired) and computer equipment connected to the Hospital's electronic medical record and information systems.**
- Non-OTH Sites are required to endeavour to provide this same level of access if residents take call at their hospitals.

Improved Lieu Day Right for Final Year Residents

- Another change that we negotiated involves final year residents who were required to work a statutory holiday on their final day of training with no compensation and no ability to take their earned lieu day. Our new agreement states that, **"a final year resident working call on any part of a recognized holiday that fell on their last day of their training is entitled to take an earlier lieu day prior to the end of their training".**

Process for Reviewing Alternative Scheduling Models for Trauma Services

- We agreed to an attachment spelling out a process for PARO and the hospitals to meet to explore **Alternative Scheduling Models for Trauma Services.** This is in alignment with our existing process to consider **alternative models of call scheduling** with services.

We are proud of what we have achieved for our members. We want to thank the members of the Board who volunteered countless hours to participate in the negotiation process. We also want to thank our legal team and our professional staff for the expertise they brought in helping us find creative ways to make significant changes to the Agreement as well as get the best financial deal possible. Finally, we want to thank the members of the Ontario Teaching Hospital bargaining team for their commitment to work with us and their willingness to make changes to the work hour provisions through the necessary bilateral process.

Details of the agreement, including a link to Arbitrator Gedalof's decision can be found by going to https://myparo.ca/arbitration-decision-2024/. You will also find comprehensive tables showing the new salary scale, call stipend rates, Chief/Senior bonuses as well as calculators that you can use to determine how much retroactive pay you might expect.

Thanks for all that you do,

Dr. Brendan Lew
PARO Negotiations Team Chair

Dr. Sabrina Slade
PARO President