



Spectrum Society for Community Living

Wage Equity Update #15

March 15th , 2004

It's been a long time since the last Wage Equity Update, but we finally have some good news on our ongoing campaign to ensure wage parity with other community social service agencies in Vancouver.

Over the last year, we have been working with individuals, their families and our employees to find ways to make our services sustainable in the face of budget reductions from government. One of our sustainability targets has been achieving wage equity for our community support workers. **A top wage of \$16.00/hour was the concrete target we had in terms of equity and we are including that as part of our wage and benefits package for April 2004.**

In February 2004, unionized employers and the 11 unions in the social service sector reached a tentative collective agreement that “protects employment”. The primary change in the agreement is the change to a tiered wage grid for community support workers. The new unionized starting wage is \$13.87 and their top wage is \$16.32/hour. There have also been significant reductions in their health and welfare benefits. The details are on the table on the back of this page.

The new collective agreement will help employers meet the budget reductions of the past year, in particular, the 1.75% cut to all contracts effective April 1, 2004. Spectrum Society faces the same cuts and has been working on finding the savings through the Graffiti Leisure Connections program, cluster housing and continued exploration of family care as an option for those interested. We still must find significant savings though and have included two changes to our wage and benefits package that will allow us to meet budget targets, maintain a competitive benefits plan, and continue our planning with consultation and collaboration as a focus. Effective April 1, 2004, Medical Services Plan premiums will be cost-shared equally between the employer and employee. As well, Spectrum's contribution to the group RRSP plan will be capped at \$25 per month. Employees will still be allowed to contribute any amount of their choice and we hope that our contribution will encourage employees to initiate and build their RRSP plans.

Administrative efficiencies have also been pursued. By closing the office for 5 days a year, we will save 2% of wages from all office staff. The five days for 2004 are April 12th, July 2nd and December 29,30,31st.

Finally, we have responded to the many requests for an improvement to the timeliness and fairness of wage increases on the grid by proposing a new increment schedule of raises after each 1500 hours instead of at the one, two and three year levels.

To finalize the compensation and benefits package contained in this bulletin, we are having a Policy & Procedures Meeting on March 31, 2004 – 4pm. Please consider these changes and forward your questions and concerns to your policy representative to bring to the meeting.

Comparison of Compensation Packages - Unionized vs. Spectrum Society

Wage Rates:

Unionized		Spectrum	
Start:	13.87	Start	14.00
2000 Hrs	14.69	1500 hours	14.50
4000 Hrs	15.50	3000 hours	15.00
6000 Hrs	16.32	4500 hours	16.00

MSP: Previously, MSP was paid 100% by the Employer

Unionized		Spectrum	
Employees Pay:	1.60% of Gross	Employees Pay:	
Single	45.26	Single	27.00
Couple	45.26	Couple	48.00
Family	45.26	Family	54.00
Employer Pays:		Employer Pays:	
Single	8.74	Single	27.00
Couple	50.74	Couple	48.00
Family	62.74	Family	54.00

SAMPLE
40 hrs /wk
\$16.32 3 Year Rate
\$45.26

Long Term Disability

Unionized		Spectrum	
Pre-April 2004	5 month waiting period 2 year own occupation period	4 month waiting period 2 year own occupation period	
New Agreement	6 month waiting period 1 year own occupation period early intervention program	No Change	

Group RRSP

Unionized	Spectrum
Matching Contributions	Tiered Contributions (Per Month) Employee Spectrum
1% Employee matched by 1% Employer	By Employee Choice \$25
2% Employee matched by 2% Employer	
3% Employee matched by 3% Employer	

Extended Health Benefits

Unionized	Spectrum
Added Direct Pay Card	Already have Direct Pay Card
Increased Eligibility Threshold to 20 hrs/week	Threshold stays at 20 hrs / week
Added Psychologist to Paraprofessionals Coverage	Already have Psychologist coverage
Employee pays 20% deductible on prescriptions	Employee pays 10% deductible on prescriptions
Each Person has \$45 annual deductible	No annual deductible
Employer pays 100% of premiums	Employer pays 100% of premiums (Subject to July 2004 renewal rates)

Dental Coverage

Unionized	Spectrum
Adult Cleaning decreased to once per nine months	Adult Cleaning once every 5 months (Subject to July 2004 renewal rates)

Sick Leave

Unionized	Spectrum
Reduced to 1 day per month	Stays at 1 day per month
Paid out at 80% of regular pay	Paid out at 100% of regular pay
Days can accumulate in a bank	Days can accumulate in a bank
No payout on termination of employment	50% of days paid out on termination