

Charlottetown Area Office, 100 Capital Drive, Charlottetown, PEI C1E 1E7

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NB Wage Freeze is a Bad Example for Our Premier
– Business as Usual for CUPE –**

Charlottetown – “The Provincial Health Council of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), consisting of four CUPE Locals (805, 1051, 1778 & 1779), will be going into full negotiations with the Department of Health in the spring, and it will be business as usual for CUPE,” says Bill McKinnon, CUPE National Representative.

CUPE represents 950 health care workers on Prince Edward Island. The majority of our membership is support service staff in areas such as Dietary, Housekeeping, Laundry and Maintenance in all hospitals, manors and addiction services on the Island.

“The Premier’s decision to freeze MLA’s and senior bureaucrats’ salaries is what it is. However, unless this government intends to legislate wage freezes, CUPE intends to enter the free collective bargaining process with the objective of reaching a fair and reasonable collective agreement at the table. Nothing constructive at this point, would come out of the two sides putting their positions out in the public, before we’ve even had a chance to start bona fide negotiations.

Premier Ghiz also commented on the push for wage freezes in New Brunswick as an example, and is quoted in a local newspaper as saying “you can see a lot of freezes in place there (NB & NS).” With all due respect, at least where CUPE is concerned, that is a poor example. What the Premier did not tell the media in his comments, is that CUPE in New Brunswick has, and still does, steadfastly refuse to accept the government’s proposal on wage freezes, and the negotiation process continues to move forward.

We can assure our government, that there is no reason to expect a different outcome from CUPE here on PEI.

However, just in case the government has any plans to use their legislative powers - ala the 7.5 % solution of the previous Liberal Callbeck administration - to interfere with free collective bargaining, the four (4) CUPE Health Locals on PEI, along with the provincial CUPE PEI Division, have already begun talks to prepare the entire membership and to chart a course for dealing with that scenario,” concluded McKinnon.

**For more information, or an interview, please contact:
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