



Talking contract

Bargaining information for LCBO employees

August 11, 2005

OPSEU members ratify new contract with LCBO

OPSEU members at the LCBO have voted “yes” to a new four-year collective agreement. The deal was approved by 83 per cent in a province-wide vote held on August 8, 9 and 10.

Important gains

Thanks to your support for the bargaining team, the agreement delivers key gains for every OPSEU member.

These include:

- New job security language that provides better protection against franchise/agency stores and contracting out
- Improvements for casual employees in both retail and logistics, including stronger provisions for conversion to seasonal or permanent status
- Health and dental benefit improvements worth more than \$1 million per year plus a drug card
- Annual wage increases of three per cent per year, with the first increase retroactive to April 1, 2005.

Take-aways off the table

Member mobilization – and your 84 per cent strike vote – also mean the employer’s demands for a series of concessions are now history. None of the following take-aways appear in the final agreement:

- Key job security cuts
- New lower wage grids for new casuals and current casuals promoted to permanent jobs in retail and logistics
- Eliminating severance pay for employees who take a reduced pension
- A series of new shift schedules in both retail and logistics
- Ending wash-up time in logistics
- Undercutting the right to union representation at pre-disciplinary meetings.



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**For more information on the final agreement, visit the OPSEU web site:
www.opseu.org**

Ratification complete

Implementing the new deal

The new collective agreement has been ratified by the LCBO board of directors. Provincial cabinet approval is expected on Wed., Aug. 17.

As a result:

- Members should see their three per cent increase in the first pay in September. Retro pay back to April 1, 2005 will also be added to that pay.
- The improvements to health and dental coverage take effect for expenses incurred after Sept. 1.
- The annual caps on paramedical and dental coverage also take effect in September as follows:
 - i. claims for services before Sept. 1 do not count towards the 2005 caps
 - ii between Sept. 1 and Dec. 31, 2005, covered expenses will be reimbursed up to the full annual caps.
 - iii. starting Jan. 1, 2006, covered expenses will count towards the 2006 caps.
- The employer will begin registering employees for drug cards this month, with a planned launch date of Nov. 1.

Work continues on benefits for casuals

OPSEU is continuing work on a union-sponsored benefits plan for casuals. Casuals aren't currently covered by the LCBO's benefits plan. Instead, they receive additional "pay in lieu" of benefits, on top of their regular wage. The union sponsored plan would be paid for from that "pay in lieu."

Once the details of the plan are finalized, it will be put to a vote of all casuals who would be covered. In the meantime, OPSEU has reached an agreement in principle with the employer to set up automatic payroll deductions, once the benefits plan is approved. Stay tuned this fall for more details.

OPSEU pushes for medical exemption to caps

The new benefit caps are a significant issue with the new agreement. LCBO management argued for the caps to limit unnecessary claims, but they could also affect some members' coverage for medically necessary treatments.

OPSEU has proposed to LCBO management that claims for medically necessary treatments be exempt from the caps. We will be raising the issue again at the next joint benefits committee meeting. If no agreement is reached, it may be necessary to file a grievance under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

In the meantime, if your past benefits claims are higher than the new caps, please contact the Liquor Board Employees Division benefits committee at 1-800-268-7376.

Continuing the fight-back

Every collective agreement is a work in progress. Job security, the fight against privatization, fairness for casuals, and benefits issues all remain major concerns. This agreement gives us the tools to defend members' jobs and working conditions – and to keep organizing around these and other key issues.

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Enforcement begins

What's Next? – Local Building, Contract Enforcement, Fight-back Campaigns

This round of bargaining was a major breakthrough for LCBO employees. In just eight weeks, we merged with OPSEU, launched an unprecedented mobilizing campaign, took a historic 84% strike vote, and made real gains at the bargaining table.

With our new contract ratified, it is time to shift gears. We need to channel our momentum into building a strong new union and tackling the major issues we will face over the life of the agreement – and in the next round of bargaining.

The Liquor Board Employees Division leadership is working on proposals for:

- The transition to a new OPSEU local structure, including steward and local executive elections and support from OPSEU regional office staff
- A divisional assembly in October to review the transition plan and give members the tools to build powerful new locals
- A province-wide strategy on issues affecting casuals, including scheduling, minimum shifts, seasonal/permanent conversion and the proposed benefits plan
- A fight-back campaign on agency stores, and a provincial anti-privatization strategy

- Renewing our labour-management, health and safety and joint benefits committees to address members' issues
- A comprehensive communications strategy to keep members informed and involved in the union.

Your ideas, energy and commitment will be key to all these initiatives. In the meantime, the work of enforcing our new contract doesn't stop. Until the transition to our new locals, the current structure remains in place. If you think the employer is violating the collective agreement or you have another workplace issue, contact your local steward or zone representative, or the Liquor Board Employees Division at 1-800-268-7376.

Your bargaining team:

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Ontario Public Service Employees Union
Liquor Board Employees Division
www.opseu.org

For more information, call 1-800-268-7376

Authorized for distribution by John Coones, Chair, Liquor Board Employees Division

