Underfunded hospitals + Artificial Intelligence = clerical jobs under threat.



Thanks to funding cuts by the Ontario government, hospitals are exploring the use of Artificial Intelligence to replace clerical workers. In fact, Lakeridge Health, Hamilton Health Sciences and Unity Health Toronto have already started introducing AI and made attempts to reduce the number of clerical staff.

Non-union employees at SickKids Hospital have few legal rights when it comes to job protection. The hospital's only obligation is the minimum floor provision under the Ontario Employment Standards Act (ESA). This is limited to notice (maximum 8 weeks) and severance pay (only for employees with more than 5 years' service and only to a maximum 26 weeks' severance pay).

The benefits of a CUPE collective agreement (CA)

Unionized staff covered by the CUPE collective agreement at SickKids by contrast are covered by layoff protections that go FAR beyond ESA.

CUPE members benefit from a comprehensive process that can make it difficult and costly for the hospital to implement layoffs or eliminate jobs.

Here's how it works:

- The hospital has to meet with the union to find alternatives to layoff.
- There is a much longer notice to the union and to any workers who will be affected by the layoff.
- Significant monetary packages must be offered to incentivize retirement-age employees to free up positions voluntarily.
- And there are a range of options for any affected employee to maximize opportunities to remain employed at SickKids.

This process saves jobs!

Get in touch!

Want to meet a CUPE organizer in person?
Contact Jonah Gindin:
647-896-9739

Sign a union card

CUPE

sickkids.cupe.ca

CUPE HOSPITAL JOB SECURITY PROTECTIONS VS NON-UNION EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ACT

JOB SECURITY PROTECTIONS	CUPE	NON-UNION
Alternatives to layoff	• The union has the right to participate in the hospital's budget process, including rights to financial and staffing information to detect potential layoffs in advance.	None
Alternatives to layoff	• Hospital required to form a redeployment committee with union to explore alternatives to layoff or elimination of any positions, prior to giving employees notice of layoff. • The union has the right to bring proposed alternatives to layoff to the hospital CEO.	None
Reassignment to avoid layoff	• If redeployment committee cannot avoid layoff, hospital must look at "reassignment" of employees into job at same wage, substantially similar shift and within reasonable distance to avoid layoff	None
Exit packages – early retirement	• Prior to giving employees notice of layoff, the hospital must first offer all employees in the affected classification early retirement packages in order of seniority. Employees eligible to retire can receive 2 weeks salary per year of service up to a maximum of 52 weeks salary to retire.	None
Exit packages – voluntary exit	• If early retirement packages don't eliminate need for layoff, the hospital must then offer all employees in the affected classification voluntary exit packages in order of seniority. Any interested employee who chooses to resign will receive **2 weeks salary per year of service up to a maximum of 52 weeks salary.**	None
Notice	• The Hospital is obligated to inform the union as soon as they become aware of job loss that may result from technological change (such as implementation of new software, artificial intelligence, etc.)	1 – 8 weeks notice, depending on length of service
Notice	• In any case, hospital must provide **no less than 5 months** notice to affected employees.	None
Layoff rights	• An employee who has received notice of layoff can bump any employee with less seniority in the same or a different job classification (provided they can meet the qualifications needed for the job/position); can retire; can take a separation allowance; can go on the recall list.	None
Layoff rights	• An employee who is bumped has the same rights as the initial employee: bump an employee with lessor seniority, retire, receive separation allowance, go on recall list. Bumping occurs within the bargaining group only ie: Service workers cannot bump Clerical workers and vice versa.	None
Separation allowance	• For employees who choose to resign after receiving notice of layoff (rather than bump): 2 weeks per year, 16 weeks maximum.	1 week per year, 26 weeks maximum (only for employees with more than 5 years' service);
Benefits on layoff	• An employee who has been laid off will continue to have access to benefits, and the hospital will continue to pay their share of benefit premiums, for 3 months after the layoff.	None
Retraining	• Hospital will retrain employees for up to 6 months if it means they can transfer to a different job to avoid layoff.	None