

Press Release  
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For Immediate Release

### **AAHP Shifts Focus Away from Conciliation Talks and Readies for Possible Job Action**

**St. John's, NL** – The Union representing more than 800 vital allied health professionals in this province has stated that it is no longer actively participating in conciliation talks with the provincial government. After walking away from the bargaining table in October 2023, the Association of Allied Health Professionals (AAHP) entered into the conciliation process this past December in the hopes of reaching a contract agreement for its membership. On Tuesday, January 16, after weeks of frustration the AAHP decided it was time to focus its energy on mobilizing the membership and determining next steps.

“Our members are done waiting and are demanding change now,” said Gord Piercey, AAHP President. “It became clear to us that the provincial government was not truly listening or making movements that demonstrate an understanding of the value our members bring to the healthcare system. They don’t seem to see the urgency here.”

While the AAHP says they are willing to review future proposals from government, they are no longer going to sit around and wait. The Union is focusing its energy on finalizing its Essential Services Agreement and supporting its membership during this frustrating time.

“We are hearing our members loud and clear and they are ready to take action and demand the equality and respect they deserve,” adds Gord. “Our commitment is to them, and doing what we need to do in order to protect and promote their value in healthcare system already in crisis. So, we are focusing on what’s next and how we prepare.”

The AAHP has expressed its concerns around the unjust compensation model for their membership and that equal pay for work of equal value is a fair demand. Members are also calling on government to create a work environment where they feel valued, respected, and heard. As of now, many Allied Health Professionals are ready to walk away from the system, and even the province.

“Newfoundland and Labrador need allied health professionals, or the healthcare system will crumble. But we are losing more and more every day to things like the private system and to other provinces where working conditions and compensation is far more competitive,” says Gord. “This government has not made retention or recruitment of AAHP members a priority, and that is why we are in this position today.”

The AAHP has been advocating for a more solid publicly funded and publicly provided Health care system for years, stressing that the public healthcare system must be protected. With private

healthcare becoming a more viable option for many healthcare workers, our public system is losing vital professionals – including allied health professionals.

“We know that the folks who need the care of allied health professionals are often the ones who have extreme difficulty accessing private healthcare. Some of our most vulnerable will end up on even longer waitlists or go without care if we don’t all stand up and demand that the public system be better protected – which starts with the retention of healthcare workers!” adds Gord.

Exhausted and frustrated, the AAHP and its membership are demanding change now. With the recent launch of their new “Allied for Action. Change Cannot Wait” campaign, the AAHP encourages members of the public to become more aware of how critical it is that allied health professionals are retained, and that the system is protected. The campaign calls on the Government of NL to recognize and demonstrate that they value this group of professionals and respect their concerns. The website ([www.alliedforaction.ca](http://www.alliedforaction.ca)) features testimonial videos from several AAHP members who share their stories, frustration and hope for change.

“Our ask is that the people of this province stand by allied health professionals now and demand better from their government. It’s very likely that anyone who has used the public healthcare system has needed the expertise and care of an allied health professional and didn’t realize it. So many lives are improved, saved, and sustained thanks to our membership and the healthcare system would be far worse without them,” concludes Gord.

Updates from the AAHP and next steps will be made available when possible. For now, a finalized Essential Services Agreement is the immediate priority.

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**Media Contact**

Erin Curran

709-325-7193

[erin@lupinecommunications.com](mailto:erin@lupinecommunications.com)