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Conciliation Breaks Down between CUPE Local 3324 Paramedics & Island EMS

St. Nicholas – “The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 3324, (Employees of Island EMS), will be proceeding to interest arbitration after one session of conciliation and nine (9) days of collective bargaining,” says Jason Woodbury, President Local 3324.

CUPE Local 3324 represents all Paramedics on Prince Edward Island and they have been lacking a collective agreement since September 30th, 2009. In the middle of the collective bargaining process in December 2010, the Ghiz Government legislated away the Paramedics right to strike through Bill 35 and replaced it with Interest Arbitration. This will be the first round of bargaining in the history of Island Paramedics to have arbitration as the final resolution in bargaining rather than strike action or a lock-out.

“The Employer continues to make no effort to address **the reality, that Paramedics on Prince Edward Island are already 14% to 17% behind their counterparts in Nova Scotia (depending on their classification) when it comes to wages.** Yet, we have the same classifications, qualifications, responsibilities (in some areas even more), and work for the same parent company, Medavie EMS (of which IEMS is a part). It is the membership’s view that wages should be equal since we are comparing ‘apples to apples’. Fundamentally we are talking about being treated by the same Employer with equality and fairness.

Once the conciliator files his report with the Minister of Community Services, Seniors and Labour, the Minister will request the parties name nominees to the Interest Arbitration board after which we can proceed to a hearing for final and binding settlement,” concluded Woodbury.

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