

HSAA Covenant Health GSS Collective Agreement Highlights

The proposed changes to the collective agreement are unanimously recommended by the bargaining committee and contain no concessions. The agreement reinforces HSAA representation through grievance, classification, OHS, layoff and FTE-adjustment language amongst other gains and language clarification. It gives members clearer rights at work and more practical tools to enforce the agreement when issues arise.

Term: April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2028

Wages and Targeted Market Adjustments

HSAA members secured general wage increases of 3% in each year of the four-year agreement. The increases apply April 1, 2024, April 1, 2025, April 1, 2026 and April 1, 2027. That puts this agreement in line with the broader HSAA settlement pattern at major tables, including AHS, while still addressing the realities of General Support Services work at Bonnyville.

There is also real movement on market adjustments where the evidence supported a correction. Food Service Worker I receives a market adjustment at ratification, with 8.3% plus \$0.33 added to Step 1 and 8.25% added to Step 2. Cook I receives a 3.2% market adjustment. Stores Worker receives a 3.09% market adjustment.

Environmental Services Worker I is retitled Environmental Service Worker and receives one of the strongest targeted adjustments in the agreement: 12.55% to Step 1 and 12.80% to Step 2 at ratification. Laundry Worker II is retitled Linen Service Worker, with an additional \$0.12 added to Step 1 effective April 1, 2027.

Community Peace Officers move to a revised five-step wage scale at ratification from a 8-step scale. The new rates begin at Step 1 with \$40.15, Step 2 \$41.49, Step 3 \$42.91, Step 4 \$44.41 and Step 5 \$45.99. For members in that work, this is a meaningful correction to the grid, not just a general increase.

Recognition for Long-Service Members

Experienced members matter. This agreement recognizes that directly through a 2% Long Service Pay Adjustment for eligible employees with 20 or more consecutive and continuous years of service, effective date of ratification. The adjustment forms part of the employee's Basic Rate of Pay. That is important. It means the value is built into the wage rate rather than being treated as a one-time lump sum that disappears after payment.

Benefits and Flexible Spending Account

The Flexible Spending Account increases from \$900 to \$1,200 for eligible full-time employees, with the amount prorated for eligible part-time employees. Members also receive a one-time implementation amount of up to \$300 deposited into eligible Health Spending Accounts after ratification, then the full amount yearly into their Flex Spending Account.

The agreement also improves or confirms benefit coverage in areas members actually use. Mental health coverage is set at a combined maximum of \$3,000 per participant per benefit year for Chartered Psychologist, Master of Social Work and Addictions Counsellor coverage. Massage therapy is set at \$50 per visit, to a maximum of \$1,000 per benefit year. Naturopath and Acupuncturist coverage is included in the existing physiotherapy coverage structure at \$35 per visit, to a combined maximum of \$700 per benefit year.

Hearing aid coverage is set at \$500 every two years. Our members specifically asked for improvements in Diabetes-related coverage, which now includes coverage language for flash glucose monitoring and continuous glucose monitoring systems. These are practical gains. They put more value into benefits members and their families are more likely to need.

Domestic Violence Leave

We were able to negotiate 5 paid shifts for any member involved a Domestic Violence situation. Strengthened language through confidentiality protections, access to applicable leave banks, hazard assessment and possible alternate work arrangements. That matters because the language recognizes safety, privacy and the real circumstances members may face outside the workplace.

Occupational Health and Safety

The agreement strengthens the way serious safety concerns move through the workplace. The Employer must notify the Occupational Health and Safety Committee, where permissible, of serious incidents, potentially serious incidents and dangerous work refusals.

Members who formally report an OHS issue through the Employer's incident reporting system can request a written manager response within seven calendar days. That response must outline the steps that will be taken to address the issue. This gives members something concrete to rely on when a concern is raised.

The Union continues to have the right to designate two bargaining-unit members to the worksite OHS Committee, and committee members are paid at the applicable rate for time spent attending committee meetings. OHS issues can also be escalated to the CEO or designate, and then to the governing Board if they remain unresolved.

The agreement maintains important language on psychological health and safety. The Employer must implement a psychological health and safety plan consistent with the current CSA psychological health and safety standard, and OHS education, training and instruction must be provided at no cost and at the applicable rate of pay.

Classification Review Rights

The classification review language is clearer and more useful. Employees can request a review when duties, responsibilities, organizational structure or classification specifications have substantively changed. The Employer must confirm receipt of the request and provide a written decision with detailed rationale.

The internal and external appeal steps are also stronger. The Union has a role in evaluating unresolved classification concerns, and where the parties cannot resolve a classification salary scale or appeal issue, the Union may refer the matter to arbitration or, by mutual agreement, to an external classification consultant.

If a classification review results in higher pay, the increase is effective back to the date the employee submitted the request. If a review results in lower pay, red-circling protection applies for up to 24 months or until the new rate catches up. Members get a clearer process and better protection on both sides of the issue.

Grievance Process and Procedural Fairness

Members maintain the right to Union representation in the grievance process. Discipline grievances now can bypass the initial discussion stage and move directly to the appropriate grievance step.

The parties must share relevant information on a without-prejudice basis and engage in meaningful discussion at grievance steps. Optional non-binding mediation remains available by mutual agreement before arbitration. The Union also has 30 days to advance an unresolved individual grievance to arbitration after the Step 2 decision.

The Employer must now disclose particulars of a concern or complaint against an employee unless disclosure would jeopardize the integrity of an investigation or process. If the Employer misses grievance response timelines, the grievance automatically advances to the next step or to arbitration. That keeps the process moving.

FTE and Scheduling Flexibility

For the purpose of promoting a better 'work life balance' regular employees now can request to adjust their FTE. The renewed FTE adjustment process allows employees to request an increase or decrease to their FTE by up to 0.3 FTE. The Employer must notify the Union of FTE-change requests within seven days and must respond in writing within 20 working days.

Requests cannot be unreasonably denied, subject to operational requirements. Seniority is considered when determining eligibility for FTE adjustments. When an employee decreases FTE, the resulting FTE must first be offered to employees in the same department and classification, with seniority determining who receives it.

The alternate scheduling trial remains available by written agreement between the Employer and the Union, with safeguards around consecutive days, days off, rest periods, split shifts and trial termination.

Respect and Reconciliation

The agreement includes a Treaty and Land Acknowledgment recognizing Treaty 6 territory, First Nations including the Cree Nehiyawak and Denesuliné, and District 12 of the Métis Nation representing the Otipemisiwak.