

June 17, 2013

By email:

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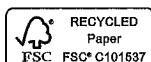
To Whom it May Concern:

On behalf of the Canadian Union of Public Employees' (CUPE) 627,000 members, we commend the State of São Paulo Health sector workers of Brazil for courageously striking for more than 40 days now to pressure the state government to open negotiations and bargain in good faith. We are aware that by law the state government should have begun to negotiate with the health workers' union representative as of March 1st. Yet, they have chosen not to sit down with employees' representatives to begin negotiations, a clear violation of the law.

Since January, the PSI affiliate, SindSaúde of São Paulo, representing the public health workers of the state of São Paulo, has planned and guided the collective bargaining campaign through regular consultations with workers throughout the state. The union has also delivered its intention to negotiate and a list of negotiable items for discussion. However, the government has said much with respect to negotiating, but has yet to sit down with the union to negotiate.

Health workers were indignant and provoked by the state government to carry out a strike on May 1st that included the state's Legislative Assembly on June 4th. For years, the state government has not granted real wage increases. Indeed, despite the restructuring of positions and salaries conducted in 2008 and 2011, workers have yet to see any results in their pocketbooks and the majority continue to earn meager wages. Currently, the national government pays federal health workers approximately double what the richest state in the country, São Paulo, pays.

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Low wages and poor working conditions reflect the state government's policy to privatize health services by awarding management contracts to private firms licensed as social organizations for the purpose of degrading public health services. In the last 10 years the state's health budget, which has disproportionately been dedicated to hospitals and clinics under private sector control, has increased by 529% while budgeting for the delivery of health services by public agencies, clinics and hospitals has grown by only 198% during the same period. Despite the fanfare for the privatization of health services, public opinion polls regularly indicate that privately delivered health care is a principal source of public complaints.

The absence of dialogue and the state's intransigence with respect to recuperating the compensation of public health care workers demonstrates the cynical indifference of the state government, not only with respect to the workers, but also the millions of citizens of the state who rely on public health care.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), an affiliate of Public Services International (PSI), calls attention to this current situation, implores the state government of Governor Geraldo Alckmin to begin negotiations with SindSaúde immediately, and to bargain in good faith in order to resolve the outstanding issues and end the strike.

In solidarity,



PAUL MOIST
National President



CHARLES FLEURY
National Secretary-Treasurer

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cc.: Pam Beattie; Michael Butler; Daria Ivanochko; Kelti Cameron; Mark Langevin (mark.langevin@world-psi.org)