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JOINT COMMUNICATION

Multi-Employer/UNA Collective Agreement

Guidelines Regarding

Booking and Cancellation of Shifts

By Casual Employees and Employers

January 19, 2007

Casual Employees and Employers have expressed significant concerns with the booking and cancelling of shifts involving Casual Employees with short notice. The Multi-Employer/UNA Joint Committee recommends the following guidelines related to this issue:

The Impact

When the Employee Cancels - When a Casual Employee has booked a shift, cancelling at the last moment leaves the Employer little time to find a replacement. This could result in the unit/program operating short-staffed thereby creating additional work and stress on other Employees and impacting patient care. Alternatively, if a replacement can be found on short notice, overtime payment is often required. This may cause the unit/program to run over budget and could, in the longer term, negatively impact staffing options and patient care.

When the Employer Cancels - When an Employer books a Casual Employee for a shift as a precaution against anticipated absences or increases in workload and then cancels at the last moment when it appears the Casual Employee won't be needed, this creates problems for the Casual Employee. The Casual Employee may have missed out on other opportunities to work, they may have made arrangements to deal with personal issues such as childcare that are difficult to change or they may have cancelled or rescheduled personal life events or appointments that are important to them.

Both the above scenarios can cause a great deal of angst, distrust and negativity in the workplace.

In addition, there tends to be a spiral effect as Employers and Casual Employees may start booking multiple shifts to protect themselves against potential shift cancellations.

Application of the Collective Agreement

In the current staffing environment, Casual Employees have multiple opportunities for accepting work. Since Casual Employees can only be scheduled with their consent, there is nothing prohibiting them from changing their consent if they receive multiple requests to work the same shift.

Under the Collective Agreement (Article 30.03(a) (i)), Casual Employees can only be scheduled more than seven days in advance if they are relieving another Employee for an absence of three months or less or for a specific job.

Where the Employer cancels a shift after the Casual Employee has reported to work, the Employee is entitled to 4 hours pay at basic rate of pay.

It is not a breach of the Collective Agreement for either the Casual Employee or the Employer to cancel the shift, even on short notice, provided it occurs prior to reporting for the shift. Even though it is not a violation of the Collective Agreement, there is a significant impact for Employees, Managers and patients/residents/clients.

Joint Committee Recommendations

1. **Minimize the occurrence of shift cancellations** - The Multi-Employer/UNA Joint Committee encourages all Employees and Employers to exercise reasonable judgment and consider the impact of their decisions when faced with these scenarios. Employees and Employers are urged to only cancel a shift where a casual Employee is already booked in the event there is an unanticipated development that would change the availability of the shift or the Employee's availability for the shift.
2. **Consider alternatives** - Employers are also urged to consider the long term impact on the availability and commitment of Casual Employees in areas where shifts are routinely offered and then later cancelled. When unanticipated situations do arise, (for example the sick employee that the Casual Employee was to replace returns to work earlier than anticipated) improved coordination between various areas of the Employer may assist in ensuring that the Casual Employee is offered alternative opportunities to work rather than simply having the booked shift(s) cancelled.
3. **Communicate** - Use communication, consideration and understanding. While we encourage Employees and Employers to avoid canceling shifts, there may be times when it is absolutely necessary to cancel a shift with short notice. Please

4. communicate with the other party as far in advance as possible. Communication is the key. Please be considerate of the circumstances around the need to cancel. In the absence of effective communications Employees and Employers may question the reliability of each other. Effective communication will improve both the quality of patient care and the relationships within the workplace.

NOTE: Collective Agreement provisions for Part-time Employees are different than those applicable to casual Employees. However, the Joint Committee encourages Employees and Employers to apply the same considerations as described above when booking and cancelling additional shifts for Part-time Employees.

If you have any questions regarding these guidelines, please contact:

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