



June 16, 2023

Hon. Minister Julie Green
Hon. Minister Caroline Wawzonek
Government of the Northwest Territories

via email julie_green@gov.nt.ca
caroline_wawzonek@gov.nt.ca

Dear Ministers,

Re: Collective Bargaining with PSAC/UNW Local 25, Avens

As you may be aware, last fall the unionized workers at Avens voted to reject the proposed collective agreement brought forward from collective bargaining. The Union bargaining team and the employer Avens then attempted conciliation earlier this year, which did not result in a tentative agreement, as the employer was not willing to negotiate a better offer. On April 22, 2023, the members showed their support for their bargaining team by voting to give them a strike mandate if necessary. . The Union bargaining team has now participated in good faith in one round of mediation and are going to into one more round of mediation, but the formal processes for negotiations are nearly exhausted.

The last thing Union members want is to disrupt services to seniors and their families – our bargaining team wants to achieve a deal through fair and respectful negotiations. They will never put any seniors’ health, safety, or well being at risk. So far, the employer has not been willing to bring an offer to the table that values or respects these workers or the essential care that they provide, and is spending their money on legal manoeuvrings instead.

As recently as June 2, Minister Green rose in the Legislative Assembly to speak about the importance of ensuring that seniors in the NWT are treated with dignity and respect. We are confident that as a long-time advocate for seniors, you would agree that this must include ensuring that the people who care for our seniors are also treated with dignity and respect.

Avens employees are more than just workers – they provide compassionate care and support, working closely with families to ensure their loved ones receive the best care possible. They can’t help but be emotionally involved with the seniors and elders in their care as well as their families.

NWT Health and Social Services, on behalf of the GNWT, provides the lion’s share of funding to Avens. On behalf of our members – who are NWT residents, voters, and taxpayers – we are appealing to you as our elected representatives, and as the Ministers who oversee the well-

being and funding for senior care in the NWT, to provide the appropriate financial support and direction for the employer to present an offer that will improve recruitment, retention, and working conditions for the people who care for one of our most vulnerable populations.

We would like to set up a mutually agreeable time to meet with you to discuss this further.

Sincerely,



Gayla Thunstrom
UNW President



Josée-Anne Spirito
PSAC North Regional Executive Vice President

cc: UNW Full Executive

