

## CAPT will send the state's final contract offer to a vote of employees

CAPT's Board of Directors will put the state's final contract proposal to a statewide vote of the 7,000 employees in the Psychiatric Technician bargaining unit.

In the next week or so, full details on all the issues will be mailed with the ballots to all CAPT members and fee-payers. The Board, which serves as the union's negotiating team, will make no official recommendation on whether to accept or reject the proposed two-year contract.

"Although our team was frankly very disappointed at the administration's position, we took this approach to let the employees decide for themselves whether the short-term financial advantages are worth the longer-term drawbacks included in the package," says CAPT State President Tony Myers.

**Improvement #1** -- A 2.5 percent pay raise retroactive to August 1, 2004 and another 2.5 percent raise effective January 1, 2005.

**Improvement #2** -- An increase in the state's payment toward health premiums, effective February 1, 2005. This would mean payroll deductions for health premiums would actually decrease, starting with the January 30 paychecks. However, even if the proposed contract is approved, for one month employees will have to absorb an increase. This will happen on the December 30 checks.

**The only take-away** -- A reduction in overtime compensation for many employees. Specifically, any sick leave an employee takes would no longer count as "time worked" toward the 40 hours after which the state must pay time-and-a-half for overtime.

The state would not accept CAPT's proposal to count the R&R pay as salary for calculating overtime pay rates and retirement contributions. Other state workers have it counted for these purposes.

Also, the state would not give Psych Techs the health benefit formula that other state workers have. That formula automatically increases the state's contributions whenever premiums rise. Instead, state payments for our bargaining unit continue to be a fixed dollar amount. That means when premiums increase in the future, CAPT would still have to negotiate for the state to increase its payment.

Finally, the proposed contract says additional negotiations could come any time after May 1, 2005. That's when the state or the union could reopen negotiations on salaries, leaves, health benefits, overtime and retirement provisions. At that time, CAPT plans to negotiate for the above R&R and health formula provisions so Psych Techs are treated equally to employees who work alongside of them.

But there's also this big downside to those reopened negotiations: The Schwarzenegger administration is expected to propose major take-aways. And they're expected to be significant hits, considering the latest estimates that the state budget will be about \$8 billion short. So an even tougher fight is expected in 2005.

