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PRESS RELEASE

UNITE LAUNCHES PETITION TO RE-OPEN NHS PAY TALKS, AS INFLATION LEAPS

Public asked to sign in protest at ‘derisory’ pay deal

Unite, the largest union in the UK, has launched a national petition to reverse the government’s hard line stance on below-inflation pay awards for NHS staff.

The aim of the petition is to build up pressure so that the government re-opens negotiations with the trade unions and professional associations over the ‘derisory’ three year pay deal.

The deal, imposed unilaterally by ministers, amounts to 7.99% over *three* years, when the Retail Price Index for inflation hit 5% this month (August).

Unite is asking its health sector members, as well as the general public, to sign the petition which it hopes to present to Downing Street later in the year.

The petition said that NHS staff deserve a ‘fair pay award’ and that the present deal is ‘poor reward for staff who deliver vital health care services to patients, service users and local communities, and it will cause long-term damage to the morale of NHS staff’.

It states: ‘At a time when people are experiencing significant rises in living costs they cannot avoid, the government should urgently re-open pay negotiations with the trade unions - we say *Cut NHS Pay - No Way!*.’

Unite National Officer for Health, David Fleming said: ‘Our members feel very real anger at this slap-in-the face from government for all their dedicated work 365 days-a-year. They voted overwhelmingly against this derisory pay deal, as they can see the cost-of-living soaring and their household bills going through the roof on a daily basis.’

The petition can be downloaded from <http://www.unitetheunion.com/health>

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Unite is campaigning against the imposed three-year NHS pay deal which will mean pay rises being barely 50% of the current rate of inflation. More information is available on the 'campaigns' page of the website www.amicustheunion.org

Unite/CPHVA press releases can be seen on the CPHVA website:
www.unitetheunion.com/cphva

Unite is the largest union in the UK. It has seven professional sections: the Community Practitioners' and Health Visitors' Association, the Mental Health Nurses Association, the Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists, the Society of Sexual Health Advisers, the Medical Practitioners' Union, College of Healthcare Chaplains, and the Hospital Physicists Association.

Unite was formed by an amalgamation of Amicus and the Transport and General Workers' Union in May 2007.