



BULLETIN

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Registered Psychiatric Nurses: Negotiators working on three key issues

During two weeks of bargaining for a new provincial contract (April 16-27), negotiators for the Nurses' Bargaining Association and Health Employers Association of BC debated three key issues without coming to a resolution.

Negotiators will pick up discussions when bargaining resumes next month.

The issues debated are:

1. Health authority-wide seniority will improve nurses' mobility and ensure nurses can maximize the value of their seniority rights. Both the unions and the employers proposed this concept, and it's close to resolution.
2. The availability and scheduling of casual employees is an issue for the employers. The health authorities are demanding that casual nurses guarantee that in most cases they will work a minimum of 225 hours a year. If the casual employee does not accomplish the minimum (provided that the work was available) their employment would be terminated. The employers are reporting that more than 3,000 nurses on their casual lists have not worked any hours in the past year. The unions are requesting that the employers guarantee that they'll backfill vacant positions when nurses are off from a scheduled shift, so casual attendance is important.
3. To address serious workload problems, the unions are proposing that the contract legally require employers to backfill vacancies when nurses are off on leave from a scheduled shift. Such a requirement also would provide better opportunities for nurses to get time off, including union leave. At the same time, the employer is proposing a one-time process for updating casual lists by having casual employees decide whether to sever their employee relationship with the health authority or begin accepting call-in to provide increased availability for work.

The unions have also proposed an improved Professional Responsibility Form (PRF) process that has not yet been accepted by the employer.

BCNU is the largest union in the Nurses' Bargaining Association. HSA and the Union of Psychiatric Nurses are also part of the association.