



NEWS RELEASE

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Health care unions call strike vote after negotiations break off for health science professionals

After seven months of bargaining, the province's health science professionals – the modern health care team that delivers the diagnostic, clinical and rehabilitation services British Columbians rely on for their health – are taking a strike vote.

The Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association (HSPBA) strike vote comes after talks broke off October 31 when the employers' association (HEABC) explained it cannot engage in meaningful bargaining because of a restrictive "cooperative gains" bargaining mandate imposed by the BC government.

"This week health science professionals tabled a fair and reasonable framework proposal that's completely in line with the government's mandate – which has allowed for four-and three- per cent wage increases in several two-year public sector agreements – including direct government service, several colleges, and for nurses," said HSA President Reid Johnson.

Health science professionals are asking for wage increases of 2 per cent in each of 2012 and 2013.

"We have been working for more than seven months on a number of complex issues to try to work cooperatively with the government to address critical shortages in health science professions, and this week HEABC delivered the message that while they view the work as productive, the government has not given them a mandate to bargain in a fair and equitable way with health science professionals," Johnson said.

"After seven months at the bargaining table the employer was unable to respond to our framework agreement, and had nothing to table in response.

"Our members have been patient, but that patience has run out. We are taking a strike vote to show government and HEABC that health science professionals are serious about negotiating a fair and reasonable contract that helps maintain health care services in BC," Johnson said.

The strike vote will wrap up on Friday, November 16.

HSPBA represents 14,000 health science professionals in hospitals and community settings throughout BC. They are represented by the Health Sciences Association of BC (HSA), BCGEU, CUPE, PEA and HEU.

- 30 -