



President's Message: Vote for public services and an inclusive economy

October 21, 2020

By HSA President Val Avery

Voting in our Provincial Election will take place this Saturday, Oct. 24, 2020. This is one year before our next fixed-date election, which would have been on Oct. 16, 2021. The reality is that – early election call or not -- this provincial election was always going to be held during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Holding the provincial election early gives the people of BC – including 20,000 HSA members – a choice about who we want to lead us through this pandemic and into the post-pandemic economic recovery. More than ever, this election is an important time to engage in discussion and debate about the future of our province, our collective priorities and what programs and services are important to us, our families and our communities.

The work you do as HSA members in health care and community social services is critical, and the policies and actions of our provincial government have a significant effect on the work we do and the patients and clients we serve. You know, more than most, how important it is that our government maintains a strong commitment to protecting and defending the public services we deliver. You have been at the forefront of this pandemic; when others were told to stay home, you were asked to show up to continue delivering vital services. And you did.

However, while the pandemic has shone a spotlight on the work you do, it has also shone a light through the cracks in our system, exposing where years of cuts have left cracks large enough for people to fall through them. As we rebuild post-pandemic, we can't simply return to how things were. This is our chance to build a resilient and inclusive economy post-pandemic, and create a British Columbia that truly works for working people.

One issue that HSA actively supports, and that the COVID-19 pandemic has spotlighted, is the importance of our public health care system. Public health care, offered on the basis of need and not on ability to pay, is a crucial part of our ability to endure this crisis and care for one another in the future.

That's why I'm asking HSA members to think about our health care system when they cast their votes in this provincial election. We need political parties to make a real commitment to investing in all aspects of our public health care system. This means something different to each HSA member, but includes recruitment and retention of staff, investments in new facilities and equipment, helping separate more people from the poisoned street drug supply, expanding community health and primary care centres, and ensuring our long-term care residences are appropriately staffed.

No matter which party (or parties) makes up our next provincial government, HSA will continue to advocate for our members and the people we care for. We are going to get through this pandemic in large part because of all the HSA members who show up each day with commitment and compassion, so let's make sure that we elect a government with a plan for a post-pandemic future that works for you.

For more information about ways to vote and your right to request time off to vote, please see [HSA's information page on the 2020 BC Election.](#)

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