



HSA President Val Avery will not seek re-election at union's June convention

March 16, 2021

This past year has been remarkably challenging.

HSA members have been front and centre as we manage through a pandemic that has affected every aspect of our personal lives and work lives. Unlike for many British Columbians, going home and staying home was not an option for our members. You were called upon to show up – under new scheduling, with the use of new technologies, and at increased risk.

More than a year later, with hope finally on the horizon, you continue to be unwavering in your dedication. And now, more than ever, people are developing a deeper awareness and understanding of the critical work of health science professionals in health care and community social services.

It is within this landscape that our union is marking our 50th anniversary!

We have a lot to celebrate. 50 years of growth, advocacy, recognition, and victories. 50 years of challenges, fights and obstacles. 50 years of friendships, solidarity, and movement building.

As I reflect on the past 50 years, I feel a deep gratitude for the work our members – past and present – do, every day. Your dedication to your patients and clients, your respect for your colleagues, and your commitment to public service is inspiring.

It has been a great honour and privilege to serve as president of HSA for the last seven and a half years.

After much consideration, I have decided not to seek another term as president. While part of me wishes I could do this forever, I know how important continuous renewal and creating space for the next generation of leaders is.

I have been an HSA member for 37 years. After growing up in Port Alberni, where the union values were strong in my family and community, I did my training as a physiotherapist at UBC, and landed a job in Victoria where I signed my union card and signed up to be a steward.

Not a minute has gone by that I did not count myself lucky to be in this union. There have been challenges, tough calls, picket lines, and hard negotiations – but always the core belief in the work we do and important role we play in our communities.

Our 50th annual convention coming up in June will be my last convention in this role – but certainly not my last as a committed member of the labour movement.

This is a great moment to reflect on our history and recommit to our shared future. We have come a long way, but there is much more we must accomplish.

The work of our members is constantly changing with new investments and technology; recruitment and retention in our members' specialized professions must be a priority; new sectors are expanding and need representation; and the larger labour movement still faces challenges to workers rights and protections.

And beyond our own union, as a society we have to find ways to ensure everyone has a voice, rights, and opportunities on a healthy planet.

As we look to the next 50 years, I am confident that HSA will set the path for new victories that will lift up our

members and workers across the province. It is an exciting, important and inspiring mission.

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