



From the Desk of the President: July 2022

Happy summer, everyone!



When I was elected President a year ago, one of my goals was to make sure members around the province are up to date on the union's work - including the work of your elected Board of Directors. In case you missed it, I reported out on a number of topics in the 2022 Annual Report, [which is available on the union's website here](#).

Today, I'm launching a more frequent report on the activities of the Board, with HSA's first e-newsletter, *Beyond the Bulletins*.

Board of Directors meetings: April 30 and June 8-9, 2022

I'll kick off the news about your Board of Directors with some very happy news, as Region 5 Director Jill Slind and her partner Dennis Quach welcomed a baby to their family on July 2. Congratulations Jill and Dennis!

At the first Board of Directors meeting held right after our annual convention on April 30, we welcomed new Regional Directors [Brooke Carter](#) (Region 2), [Alexandra Thomson](#) (Region 4), and [Heath McLeod](#) (Region 8). [Nancy Hay](#) (Region 6) returned to the board after two years. Elections for these positions were held in the spring, and [Mandi Ayers](#) (Region 10) also continues to serve on the board. Elections for Regional Directors who represent members in odd-number regions will be held in the spring of 2023.

Also at our first meeting, the Board of Directors held elections for the union executive, and elected Mandi Ayers as your vice-president, and [Becky Packer](#) (Region 2) as secretary-treasurer.

Board members were also elected to the union's governance committees made up of board members and members-at-large elected by members at Annual Regional Meetings. Many of those committees have already started meeting and planning their work for the coming year. For a list of committees and the board members and members-at-large serving on them, see [here](#).

At our first two-day meeting in June as a new board (the first in-person since early 2020!), we received governance training to understand our roles and duties as elected union officials. As a Board of Directors, the job of Regional Directors is to represent the membership as a whole and bring perspectives from members in all regions, and to leave individual contract matters to each chapter's capable steward teams and the Labour Relations Officers who support them.

We reviewed and voted on any resolutions that did not make it to the floor of the April convention, and will report the results of those votes once the board reviews and approves the minutes of the meeting.

We also reviewed the feedback from convention delegates, and will investigate and consider suggestions to ensure the next annual convention is a good experience for as many delegates as possible.

In addition, the Board of Directors received reports from our governance committees, whose work is just getting underway, and received and discussed reports from staff.

NUPGE Convention 2022: Unity is Our Power

On June 17-19, the Board and two staff members were delegates to the triennial National Union of Public and

General Employees (NUPGE) Convention, held in St. John's, Newfoundland. NUPGE is a national union made up of unions from across the country - mostly representing members from the public sector. HSA has been a member of NUPGE since 1986, giving us a voice at the federal level on important issues in health care and community social services. HSA resolutions submitted to the national convention included addressing Pharmacare, the environment and health care issues. Members of our Board of Directors spoke to a number of resolutions, including labour shortages, the role of the labour movement in confronting racism, as well as long-term care and a just transition to a greener economy.



HSA board members at the NUPGE Triennial Convention (l-r): Brooke Carter, Heath McLeod, Jas Giddha, Kane Tse, Nancy Hay, Jing-Yi Ng, Mandi Ayers, Janice Morrison, Alexandra Thomson (missing: Becky Packer)

As chair of the convention's Resolutions Committee, I appreciated the number of times our delegates spoke to these issues, and the importance our delegation placed on ensuring delegates from across the country understand the issues our members and communities experience in BC.

Our own past president Val Avery was awarded a Life Membership in NUPGE for her service to the labour movement. She is one of only 17 people ever to receive this honour, and we were proud to see her dedicated work at the national level being recognized.

But most importantly, NUPGE allowed us to build the critically important relationships with other unions across Canada that also represent health care professionals like our members. Having their support means we mutually aid and assist one another, whether it's during job action, or on government policies ranging from bargaining and austerity budgets, to mandates, to privatization and beyond. I was particularly pleased that HSA was highlighted for the work we are doing on anti-racism within our workplaces, communities and our own union, and made some excellent connections with union members in other provinces embarking on this work.



[NUPGE's newly elected executive, President Bert Blundon \(l\) and Secretary-Treasurer Jason MacLean \(r\) with NUPGE's BC component presidents Kane Tse and Stephanie Smith \(BCGEU\).](#)

Bargaining Update

A new agreement has been ratified by our members at Paragon Orthotics. Congratulations!

At the other bargaining tables, negotiations are underway at the HSPBA (health science professionals), CBA (community health) and CSSBA (community social services) tables. Bargaining has still not started in the NBA (nurses).

To support the bargaining committees' work, we continue to work with other public sector unions in BC to coordinate our efforts and speak with a louder voice. Stressing the impact of workload, wages and the shortages that you face every day, we relate these issues to the real-world impacts on patient care as the focus of our messages to media, to government and the public.

With so many public sector contracts up for negotiation (the majority of public sector contracts expired March 31, 2022), the first group government negotiators are focused on is the government public sector master agreement (BCGEU) that covers provincial government employees. BCGEU members recently voted 95 per cent in favour of going on strike to back contract demands. Just this week talks stalled, and the BCGEU is focusing its efforts over the next several weeks on negotiating essential services levels in anticipation of possible job action. BC's essential services legislation requires that agreement be reached on essential services of staffing required to protect the public from immediate and serious danger, while balancing workers' right to strike.

Like the BCGEU, HSPBA has tabled a wage proposal that keeps up with inflation.

HSA and other unions in the health care sector have been working on establishing agreement on essential service staffing levels since January, ensuring that HSA is in a position to take job action in the event that bargaining breaks down.

Our bargaining teams are composed of HSA members like you who bring important front line perspectives to the negotiations. They were elected last fall at Bargaining Proposal Conferences to negotiate with the employer.

The HSPBA negotiations are led by HSA, and the bargaining committee is focusing its work throughout the summer on negotiations to address the issues of health and safety in the workplace. This is an area that is

critically important to our members – particularly during this past two and a half years of the pandemic, dangerously high number of unfilled positions, and general burnout of health care workers.

If your bargaining committee is not able to get to a tentative agreement that they believe will meet the needs of the membership as a whole, they may make a recommendation to the Board of Directors that we conduct a strike vote to show the employer they have your full support for a contract that values what you do.

Remember that you will cast the final vote on whether to accept or reject a contract offer.

The power is in your hands. The best way to make an informed decision is to ensure that your contact information is updated using the link below so that you can receive the latest bargaining information.

<https://hsabc.org/contact/member-contact-update-form>

Core Member Engagement Team



The Core Member Engager Team (CMET) program is currently reviewing applications for members to participate on the team this fall. These members will be booked off from their workplaces for an extended period, as they build their mobilization skills and help steward teams throughout the province. As pandemic restrictions continue to be relaxed, this year will allow for more opportunity for members to be on-site than previous years. It is a great program that helps members to see the work that goes into our union and helps members like you to learn about some of the many things that your union is doing for you.

Meetings

Since our annual Convention at the end of April, I've continued to meet with important stakeholders and allies to promote your work and our issues at a variety of levels. In addition to the aforementioned NUPGE Convention, I attended HSA Alberta's Convention celebrating their 50th anniversary in order to understand how they push back against their government and draw inspiration from their Young Workers who organize protests alongside their Political Action Committee, but who also actively volunteer with charities in their community. I also attended the Manitoba Government & General Employees Union's (MGEU) Convention virtually and learned about how they are tackling the differences in servicing between their rural and urban communities. Anything that we can learn from other unions across the country has been valuable to improve our own efforts within HSA.

Government relations

Speaking of lessons learned, I attended our government's [COVID-19 Lessons Learned](#) consultation, where we talked about how the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic could have been improved. From ensuring the availability of N95 and PPE, to the prioritization of PCR testing and vaccinations for our frontline members, the implementation of vaccination mandates and single-site transition frameworks, ensuring that policy decisions are made based on the latest science regarding aerosol transmission, Omicron spread among vaccinated populations and the effective use of rapid tests.

I also made a presentation to the *Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services* to support our 2022 budget consultation submission, emphasizing that the next budget must set aside dollars to ensure that wage parity for you, otherwise the shortage situation will continue to worsen beyond the critical levels that you face every day, and this is part of a long-term issue that must be addressed.

And in June I met with a number of your Professional Associations, who were also making presentations to this same committee, and we have shared our information so that the committee is hearing the same message from multiple voices. While this is not directly bargaining at the negotiating table, these efforts are aimed at providing the employer with more financial resources to address the wage and recruitment and retention issues.

Regional Meetings

As we come to Fall, we will be holding our regional meetings in September and October. Chaired by your Regional Director, this is an opportunity to learn more about what your union has been doing and to ask questions. Your chapter can elect delegates to send to the Regional Meeting. If you are interested in attending, look for bulletins about electing representatives to the regional meetings, [contact your regional director for more information.](#)

In Closing

Throughout the summer, I hope to meet some of you at chapter meetings either virtually or in-person. If you're planning an event or meeting over the summer, let your LRO know so that we can hear from you and support the work you are doing in your communities and workplaces.

In the meantime, I hope you are able to enjoy a wonderful summer. Please take care of yourselves, stay healthy and continue to do the great and valuable work that you do every day.

In solidarity,
Kane

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