



BULLETIN

Health sciences move toward job action

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Job action could be looming in the health-care sector after members of the Health Sciences Association voted 90 per cent in favour of a strike.

Association president Reid Johnson said talks between the association and the province are tentatively expected to resume Thursday or Friday.

"These are some of the smartest people in health care and we've got a 90-per-cent strike vote. That says something," he said Tuesday.

The association's 17,000 members have been without a contract since March.

Of those, about 450 work at Royal Inland Hospital, the Thompson-Nicola Family Resource Society and long-term care homes like Ponderosa Lodge and Overlander Extended Care.

The union represents a wide range of professionals -- from lab techs to physiotherapists, social workers, dietitians, pharmacists, music therapists, child-care consultants and special needs preschool teachers.

Aside from doctors, his members generally undertake the most post-secondary education -- both bachelor degrees and doctorates.

He said the union hasn't had a wage increase in four years and members are falling behind the cost of living.

The union is seeking a two-per-cent increase for the next two years, but the province is unresponsive.

Meanwhile, the nurses signed a contract giving them a three-per-cent increase for two years, said Johnson.

"Nobody gets into a hospital or out of a hospital without our intervening" he said.

"Our members save lives every day. They are tired of living like second-class citizens."

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