

BULLETIN

Bargaining opens for health science professionals collective agreement

March 17, 2010

Talks got underway today in Burnaby for a new collective agreement for health science professionals who deliver the critical diagnostic, clinical and rehabilitation services British Columbians depend on for their good health.

Reid Johnson, President of the Health Sciences Association of BC, said the bargaining committees mandate is to achieve a collective agreement that protects quality health care and values the work of health science professionals.

-We see this round of bargaining as an opportunity for a thoughtful process that will strengthen the system in a way that makes a real difference in the delivery of the specialized skills patients depend on, and that health science professionals bring to the modern health care team," Johnson said. HSA is the lead union in the Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association (HSPBA), which also includes members of CUPE, BCGEU, PEA, and HEU.

-We have expectations that the leadership, commitment, and flexibility we have demonstrated by working with you time and time again in the past several years will be recognized in this process," he said.

Maureen Headley, HSPBAs chief negotiator, tabled a list of bargaining objectives.

-We know our members like their jobs• they want to feel good about their jobs• they want to know they are working in a system that values quality patient care• and that values the people we all depend on to deliver the diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation patients need. Our members also need assurances they will have the resources they need to be successful at their jobs," she added.

-Our members know there is a real connection between ensuring quality health care and having a voice to ensure we are talking to the right people so we can fix the problems," she said.

She said the objectives outlined in the unions opening proposal set the tone for a positive and productive bargaining agenda aimed at delivering improvements to the health care system to benefit patients and their families, the members of the modern health care team responsible for their health, and employers working towards a mandate of improved quality of care and smooth delivery of services.

Headley said the following elements will be keys to a successful collective agreement.

- **Delivering Quality Healthcare**
Ongoing joint initiatives that recognize the value of health science professionals in health care delivery and that involve and include health science professionals in health care changes.
- **Fair Wage Increases**
Wage increases that recognize the value of health science professionals and are consistent with increases for members of the modern health care team in BC and across the country.
- **Modernizing the Classification System**

Development of a unified, transparent, rationalized wage schedule that is responsive to the current industry structure while protecting integral features.

- Recruitment and Retention

Initiatives that attract people to health science professional disciplines; that attract trained health science professionals to work in the BC public health sector.

- Enhanced Quality of Work life

Initiatives related to workload, scheduling, education, leaves of absence, violence prevention, occupational health and safety, and other healthy workplace improvements.

- Improved Benefit Package

Maximizing the value of the benefit package to meet the differing needs of the membership.

- Sick Leave and Disability Management

Development of a seamless integrated sick leave and disability management scheme that supports early and productive return to work.

- Job Security and Seniority

Initiatives to protect and enhance members entitlements particularly in response to consolidation/integration of service.

- Improve Administration of the Collective Agreement

Clarification of existing provisions to ensure collective agreement language reflects existing entitlements, improved grievance processing, housekeeping changes to streamline the collective agreement, and other initiatives that make the collective agreement more efficient or allow better harmonization/coordination of existing benefits.

The Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association represents 17,000 health science professionals who deliver public health care services in hospitals and communities across the province. The current HSPBA collective agreement expires March 31, 2010.

HSA representatives on the bargaining committee are Maureen Headley, Chief Negotiator; Val Avery (HSA Vice President and Region 2 Director) - Bargaining Committee Chair, Physiotherapist at Victoria General Hospital; Joan Magee (Region 8 Director), Medical Laboratory Technologist, Cariboo Memorial Hospital; Miriam Martin, Resource Coordinator, Positive Womens Network; Aaron Wilson, Community Coordinator, Centre for Ability; Darwin Wren, Social Worker, Tumbler Ridge Health Centre; and alternate committee members Kimball Finigan (Region 5 Director), Radiation Therapist, Vancouver Cancer Centre; John Christopherson, Social Worker, Vancouver Cancer Centre, and Cheryl Greenhalgh, Medical Radiation Technologist, Royal Columbian Hospital.

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180 East Columbia
New Westminster, BC V3L 0G7

Website
www.hsabc.org

Telephone 604-517-0994
1-800-663-2017