

BULLETIN

Unions table proposals to address health science professional shortages

June 17, 2010

The Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association tabled proposals today at the bargaining table aimed at protecting and improving quality public health care in hospitals and communities across the province.

Two key proposals address continued problems health authorities have in keeping and recruiting the health science professionals critical to the modern health care team.

-We know, and employers know, that without health science professionals, the health care system cannot function to its capacity. Without the highly specialized diagnostic, clinical, and rehabilitation specialists, wait lists grow," said Maureen Headley, chief negotiator and HSAs Executive Director of Labour Relations and Legal Services.

-We have tabled proposals that focus on these problems, and reflect a real commitment to have an in-depth and detailed discussion about the challenges in recruitment and retention. The ultimate goal is to have a creative discussion and develop strategies that address these continuing issues," Headley said.

The proposal addressing shortages calls for a working group to be established to collect and analyze data in order to identify the disciplines, professions, and regions where staffing shortages exist. It will also explore factors that cause the shortages, including: availability of training spaces, benefits such as vacation, scheduling, and benefit, and support for professional development.

The working group would identify best practices and appropriate solutions to improve recruitment and retention in the health science professions.

The proposal addressing retention addresses members demonstrated commitment to career development. A working group is proposed to make recommendations to enhance career-laddering opportunities for health science professionals.

The working group would identify barriers to effective career laddering and leadership positions for health science professions, and make proposals to remove those barriers and include more highly specialized health science professionals in leading the modern health care team.

Bargaining for a new collective agreement for BCs health science professionals, the trusted members of the modern health care team who deliver the highly specialized diagnostic, treatment and rehabilitation services patients depend on for their good health, began in April 2010, and continues in July. The collective agreement expired March 31, 2010.

The Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association represents 17,000 health science professionals working in BC hospitals and communities. They are members of Health Sciences Association, BC Government and Service Employees Union, Canadian Union of Public Employees, and Professional Employees Association.

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