



BULLETIN

Community social services negotiations stall; discussions begin on essential services

September 24, 2010

Bargaining for the community social services sector contract resumed this week, but quickly stalled.

Josef Rieder represents HSA at the bargaining table, with HSA bargaining team chair Lynn Kelsey. -In the absence of meaningful discussion that could lead to an agreement, the Community Social Services Bargaining Association has asked the employer for dates to begin discussion on essential service levels," he said.

The bargaining team has been working towards a fair contract since last October. -Although some progress had been made on minor issues, efforts to secure any real gains for members have not materialized," Rieder said.

Community social services workers are among the lowest paid public sector employees. Over the last two agreements, members have experienced substantial cuts in compensation and benefits, including sick time and long term disability.

-At the outset of this round of bargaining, members provided the bargaining committee with a clear mandate to move forward on a number of issues," Rieder said. -Were serious about reaching a fair settlement that improves the working life and conditions of our members. Without real improvements, the sector will continue to suffer high staff turnover.

"These are the jobs that support the most vulnerable people in our communities, but many agencies are experiencing problems with recruitment and retention."

The bargaining team will meet again with employers for three days of negotiations starting October 26.

The Community Social Services Bargaining Association bargains on behalf of 15,000 unionized community-based social services workers in BC, including 800 HSA members. The BCGEU is the lead union at the table.

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