



Community social services: members meet to discuss next steps to secure a fair deal

February 11, 2011

In recent weeks, HSA members working in community social services have been attending membership meetings across the province to discuss next steps in their efforts to secure a fair collective agreement.

The meetings were scheduled by the multi-union Community Social Services Bargaining Association (CSSBA) in response to the current impasse at the bargaining table, where employers have refused to consider solutions to a range of problems affecting workers and the critical services they provide.

Josef Rieder represents HSA at the bargaining table, with HSA bargaining team chair Lynn Kelsey and Ron Ohmart.

Rieder noted the unions have been in bargaining for more than a year. "Our members provide support services for some of the most vulnerable people in our communities," he said.

"When the court system or victim services or the health system refer people to community services, that's us. Community social service workers need improved working conditions to protect and stabilize the valuable services they provide," he added. "We need the employer to work with us towards real solutions."

Members attending the meetings voiced their concerns about the obstacles they face on a daily basis and were encouraged to get involved in activities to increase pressure on employers and government to achieve a fair deal at the bargaining table.

Members are encouraged to visit the unions' website at www.cssfairdeal.ca and send a message to their MLA.

The unions bargaining association will be meeting on February 21 and 22 to plan the timing of next steps.

At the same time, preparations are underway for Community Social Services Awareness month. Events are scheduled across the province throughout the month of March, including a celebratory Walk in Victoria on March 26th.

Members are asked to contact their union for more information about how they can get involved in these and other events to raise awareness about the services they provide in their communities.

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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