

BULLETIN

Registered psychiatric nurses: bargaining focuses on four main issues

April 5, 2012

The elected bargaining committee for the Nurses Bargaining Association has completed two more weeks of negotiations with the Health Employers Association of BC (March 19-30), with discussions focusing on four issues:

1. Responsive Shift Scheduling:

Discussion with employers about how to improve shift scheduling to respond to employees needs when scheduling shifts.

2. Alternative Dispute Resolution Process (ADR):

An agreement reached to implement a new expedited arbitration process to resolve issues arising from the Provincial Collective Agreement in a more timely manner.

3. Amalgamated Seniority List: Health Authority Wide:

Moving toward completing the merger of seniority lists on a health authority basis.

4. More Permanent Employment:

The bargaining association is investigating how many overtime and casual hours should be converted to regular full-time or regular part-time positions. The employer has debated the rules on how casuals are scheduled.

The Nurses Bargaining Association has not tabled a wage proposal, but is calling for a four-year term for the collective agreement, which includes a wage increase. The employer has countered with a proposal for a wage freeze for two years, with the possibility of improvements based on the provincial governments "cooperative gains" formula.

This formula would "match" all monies saved with a two-for-one offer. For example, if the unions improved productivity or found savings worth one million dollars, the employer would match the million, giving the unions two million dollars to improve the contract. But the approach is questionable. The BC government will not finance it; the health authorities must cover the costs of the "matching productivity gains" approach from their current revenue.

NBA has not put a wage proposal on the table. The objective is for health employers and the government to focus on nurses top priority ... measures to deal with workload, patient safety and understaffing.

The NBA has stated it will not negotiate a four year agreement without a raise and will not negotiate concessions.

The next bargaining sessions are scheduled April 16 to May 4.

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