



Health science professionals vote 90 per cent in favour of striking

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Health science professionals have delivered a resounding 90 per cent strike vote to back their bargaining committee in negotiations with BC's health employers.

-This strong vote sends a clear message to government and health authorities that its time to come to the table and negotiate a fair and reasonable collective agreement," said Reid Johnson, President of the Health Sciences Association of BC, the union that represents the majority of the 17,000 health science professionals in the Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association (HSPBA) who have been without a contract since March. Other unions in the bargaining association are BCGEU, CUPE, PEA, and HEU.

-We have been at the bargaining table working to negotiate a new collective agreement. Talks broke down October 31. After seven months, the government and health authorities have nothing to offer. They have not responded to a wage demand, they refuse to respond to repeated requests for costing on budget-saving measures, and they have not dealt with important issues that matter to patients and the modern health care team we all count on for our good health," Johnson said.

-Health science professionals are the highly skilled members of the modern health care team who provide specialized care. Without playing their part in the diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of patients in all aspects of care, the health care system could not function," he said.

-We know, our members know, and patients know that without members of the modern health care team, the wait for diagnostics, treatment, and rehabilitation grows. Our bargaining team has proposed reasonable improvements that that will help keep these highly specialized health science professionals from going to other provinces to work," he said.

HSPBA Chief Negotiator Jeanne Meyers said the strike vote delivers a strong message to government and health authorities that its time to negotiate under the government-imposed -cooperative gains" mandate, not hide behind that mandate.

-We've seen other employers able to work within the government mandate, and reach agreements that provide fair and reasonable settlements in the public sector. Health science professionals deserve no less," she said.

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