



Rotating strikes planned for Thursday, Friday as health science professionals pressure for a new union contract

December 3, 2012

As health science professionals return to the bargaining table today, plans to begin rotating strikes have been delayed one day to demonstrate good faith in the bargaining process. Talks between the Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association and Health Employers Association of BC are scheduled to continue through the week.

With the change, the rotating strikes will begin Thursday, December 6. That day, pharmacy services at BC hospitals will be reduced to essential service levels only from 9 a.m. to midnight.

There will be no picket lines.

-Pharmacists are especially frustrated with the lack of progress at the bargaining table. This is the group of highly trained and specialized members of the health care team who government targeted for a 15% wage cut earlier this year ... even as recruitment and retention continues to be a growing problem as the retail sector pays more competitive wages," said HSA President Reid Johnson.

-While government backed off on the wage rollback, after eight months at the bargaining table, we have yet to see a wage offer of any kind for any health science professionals," he said. The contract expired March 31.

The second group of health science professionals scheduled to take job action are all medical imaging technologists ... the people who conduct x-rays, CT scans, MRIs, ultrasound, nuclear medicine, and other imaging procedures.

They will reduce their work to essential services only from midnight Thursday to midnight Friday. The only exception to the reduction of service will be at Surrey Memorial Hospital, which is just recovering from a catastrophic flood that affected services in medical imaging, as well as closing the emergency department. Public health inspectors will also reduce services to essential service levels that day.

-While other members of the professional health care team keep getting wage increases handed to them by government, health science professionals have been falling behind. Without them, the health care system cannot function, and our members say its time their contribution to the modern health care team is recognized," he said.

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