

BULLETIN

HSA activists paving the way for bargaining season

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by CINDY STEWART



When Carole Taylor, BC's Minister of Finance, announced in November that there is money on the table for the up-coming round of negotiations with public sector unions, including 99 per cent of HSA members, she signaled the real start of the public sector bargaining season.

HSA has been preparing for this season on many fronts, working to ensure the issues important to HSA members are heard and understood by government and other players in contract negotiations.

Through the work of HSAs constituency liaisons, who work to educate government representatives about the work that our members do, to the members who have written letters to the editor and their MLAs explaining the work that you do, and the continued dialogue and discussion with health authority and government representatives, HSA has an increasing profile in the community and with decision-makers. That profile-building is an important key to making sure that decision-makers understand the importance of your work.

The unions bargaining process is also in full swing. Bargaining proposal meetings for members covered by the Community Social Services and Community Health agreements were held in November, and a survey and focus group for members covered by the Nurses agreement has fine-tuned HSA members priorities for bargaining at that table.

January 24 to 26, the Paramedical Professional Bargaining Association bargaining proposal conference will consider the bargaining proposals made by HSA members in chapter meetings held in the past several weeks. In addition to the priorities forwarded by members at chapter meetings, HSA is conducting an independent poll of a representative sample of members to hear from you about the issues that are important to you in this round of negotiations.

With that information, delegates to the Bargaining Proposal Conference will deliberate the proposals, set priorities for bargaining, and elect bargaining committee members to represent you at the negotiating table.

Negotiating committee members have already been elected as HSA representatives to the other tables where HSA members will be in contract negotiations.

In Community Social Services, Pat Jacklin, a member at Comox Valley Transition Society will join HSA Senior Labour Relations Officer Josef Rieder in representing HSA members interests. Region 7 Director and RPN Audrey MacMillan and Member Services Coordinator Kathy McLennan will represent HSA at the Nurses

Bargaining Association Table. Charles Wheat, a member at South Peace Child Development Centre and Senior Labour Relations Officer Lori Horvat are the HSA representatives at the Community Health table.

As we head into what could be very intense negotiations, I want to thank our negotiating committee members for the commitment they have made on your behalf to achieve the best possible agreements for HSA members.

I also want to thank all members who have contributed feedback and input which will help inform our bargaining teams. 

Cindy Stewart is HSA President.

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