

BULLETIN

HSA committees work to make an important difference

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s delegates to HSA's 32nd annual convention wrapped up proceedings of this year's two-day meeting, the room was filled with a sense of a renewed energy to take on the tasks of the coming years.

Delegates left united in our resolve to ensure HSA is front and centre when government and employers consider changes to how health care is delivered in British Columbia. Throughout the convention, we also heard from the union's committees about the work they are doing on behalf of HSA.

The Political Action Committee has taken a big step towards increasing awareness about HSA members' issues among key cabinet minister and MLAs in the Liberal government by appointing HSA Constituency Liaisons who will be the voice of HSA with those representatives. This group of six HSA members has accepted this task with enthusiasm and commitment to making an impact on their MLAs. This is the kind of profile HSA has been working toward developing, and that is increasingly necessary, to defend the services we provide in communities throughout the province.

Delegates were treated to an excellent presentation by the Committee for Equality and Social Action, highlighting the work of the various groups supported by the HSA Solidarity Fund. The committee also hosted a successful lunch, where DanceArts BC and CoDevelopment Canada made direct presentations to delegates about the work they are doing with their funds. Last year, the committee made donations totalling \$35,500 to a number of groups working on issues from the promotion and protection of human rights to the elimination of poverty.

Reports from the Occupational Health and Safety, Education, and Run for the Cure committees also highlighted the impressive amount of commitment that HSA activists have to ensuring all members experience the importance of the union's work in these areas. In the area of occupational health and safety, delegates heard of changes in legislation that will hamper workers' access to support if they suffer an occupational injury or illness, and the union's efforts to provide education, information and support to health and safety stewards.

The Run for the Cure committee celebrated its most successful year ever. A record 23 HSA teams participated in the 2002 run, and raised \$17,000 in donations to the BC Breast Cancer Foundation. HSA was also awarded the Foundation's Professional Award this year in recognition of our contribution to the fight against breast cancer — not only as a union, but for the care provided by HSA members. I am already looking forward to HSA's participation in this year's run on Sunday, October 5 — mark your calendars!

A key to HSA's continued growth and maturity has been the work of our Education Committee in delivering

quality educational programs for stewards and other members. This past year was no different, as delegates heard in the committee's report. The focus on member mobilizing has been at the core of all our education programs and we're starting to see that concentration pay dividends as our members gain the confidence and experience to become more involved.

Our convention's theme this year was "Stronger Together." It's a theme we can carry forward into the coming year. We have been working internally to develop skills to benefit our members and strengthen our union, we have been working in the labour movement to develop a strong and unified voice for workers' rights, and we've been working in our communities to develop strong ties with our neighbours to defend critical public services.

There's no doubt we are stronger together, and we will have to be as we ready ourselves for the next two years of a Liberal government. 

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