

PPBA: health science professionals begin talks

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argaining between the Paramedical Professional Bargaining Association and Health Employers Association of BC was temporarily suspended in April after several bargaining sessions that started in late February.

-It became clear to the two sides bargaining committees that while negotiations had been frank and cordial, the uncertainty in the broader health care labour relations community was an obstacle to continued productive talks," PPBA Chief Negotiator Ron Ohmart said.

-The PPBA went to the bargaining table with a very concise proposal that addressed issues of concern to health science professionals. In the several negotiating sessions we have had since February, we have made significant progress on issues around the management of human resources issues during the upheaval in health care caused by massive restructuring."

Ohmart said the suspended talks give HEABC an opportunity to consider several issues raised by the union bargaining association.

-While the employer came to the table with a package of concessions, the union proposal focused on protecting and enhancing important elements in the collective agreement that address members concerns about their ability to provide quality health care in a climate of staff shortages and program management. We have given them a lot to think about," he said.

-When we opened negotiations, the union bargaining committee said it was determined to find a way to negotiate a collective agreement. We are still determined, and are comfortable that suspending talks allows the two parties at this negotiating table to continue a respectful bargaining relationship in a very difficult time in the health labour relations community."

HSA bargaining committee representatives went to the negotiating table with a clear message from HSAs bargaining proposal convention in February: Health science professionals are a critical part of the health care team, and their contribution must be acknowledged.

HSA members are concerned about decision-making that is seeing health care service to British Columbians threatened. While the Liberal government promised in the last election that British Columbians would have health care where and when they needed it, health science professionals know that hasn't happened.

Following the bargaining conference Ohmart said the bargaining committee had a strong mandate to speak up for health care.

-Health science professionals number one priority is patient care. Quality patient care is worth defending, and HSA will be going to the table advocating for the best possible care for all British Columbians. We heard from our members what it takes to do their jobs as respiratory therapists, social workers, psychologists, dietitians,

lab and x-ray technologists, and all the health science professionals who deliver the diagnostic, clinical and rehabilitation services in our public health care system," he said.

-It takes recognition of the value of their work, their training and their dedication to making British Columbians healthy," he added. 

The Paramedical Professional Bargaining Association represents approximately 13,000 health science professionals in the Health Sciences Association, BC Government and Service Employees Union, Canadian Union of Public Employees, Professional Employees Association, and the Hospital Employees Union. [Click here for up-to-date information about paramedical professional bargaining.](#)

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