

BULLETIN

HSA: hard at work for each and every member

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There is a common misconception held by many that once a contract is ratified, negotiations are concluded. That is not the case. The activities that flow from the Paramedical Professional table illustrate how the process of negotiations continues well beyond the ratification date.

Just the printing of a new collective agreement is a major task. The work began immediately following ratification and involved months of meetings with the employer and the printer. The new contract is just now being distributed to the membership.

Another task has been to conclude two separate "levelling" processes. The most recent (the Foley process) was negotiated for those employees covered by the paramedical professional contract after April 1998. The previous (the Taylor process) was still outstanding from the 1996 round of negotiations. The latter proved impossible to resolve earlier as the employer refused to move off their position that employees affected would be placed into a "new" classification system not yet negotiated. It was not until our current classification system was confirmed in the 1998 negotiations that we were finally able to conclude the proper placement of members in the classification system.

While agreement has been reached with respect to placement of members in the classification system, wages have not yet been adjusted. HSA has met with the Public Sector Employers' Council (PSEC), Ministry of Health and HEABC to expedite the payment of this money owing since 1996. Wage adjustments will be made soon, but the benefit packages and retroactive pay remain outstanding and will require further negotiations.

The process to set up the new Long Term Disability plan was protracted and complicated, involving a number of trust lawyers representing the union, employer and government respectively. The Trust Agreement, Plan Document and Administrative Agreements had to be negotiated before the 6 million dollars was released. This work has now been concluded and our new (LTD Trust #2) and previous (LTD Trust #1) plans are operating with the new common plan administrator: the Healthcare Benefit Trust (HBT).

The OH&S Agency, initially negotiated at the Facilities Support table, also added to the post-ratification activity. Following a series of meetings, the Agency's structure and mandate was finalized and the key position of Executive Director has been filled. We now look forward to the Agency beginning the critical task of addressing health and safety issues in the workplace.

We have started and will continue to meet with senior representatives of the B.C. Cancer Agency. Labour relations problems within the Agency were brought to the fore as a result of the first ever job action by BCCA members.

This, in turn, triggered meetings between HSA and the Ministry and eventually between HSA and the Agency.

We have met with ICBC, WCB and government representatives to discuss rehabilitation services. These

meetings have been promising and will continue as we explore how the parties can work together to enhance rehabilitation services.

This short list outlines just some of the work that continues beyond a ratification date. While these examples are reflective of the Paramedical Professional table, the work can be extrapolated to all the tables where HSA represented members: Nurses, Community Support and CSSEA. For HSA, there is no [end] to negotiations.

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