



BULLETIN

Job action underscores importance of HSA members

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The recent job action taken by HSA paramedical professionals clearly gave our bargaining team the momentum we needed to get a fair collective agreement. By putting pressure on health employers, we were able to get the provincial government involved in our negotiations, forcing HEABC to address our issues seriously.

But our job action strategy also had some other interesting spin offs... not all anticipated. Within the labour movement, the health care system and among the general public, our job action raised the profile of our members and highlighted the important services that we provide to British Columbians.

The media coverage we received was unprecedented. Nearly every day during the dispute, we were in the public eye outlining our issues and defending our rights. With up to 20 or 30 media calls a day, we had to be well prepared and well researched. Most importantly we had to show the public that we are reasonable, practical, but determined. HSA has always enjoyed this reputation and it remains intact today because across the province our members rose to the challenge. HSA members came across as competent, professional, articulate, intelligent and completely in love with their work.

In particular, our Paramedical Professional Days uncovered parts of the health care system that the media and public knew little about. And quite frankly, they found it fascinating "the range of services we provide, the complexity of our jobs, our relationships with our patients.

For me personally, dealing with reporters every day was new and somewhat uncharted territory. While I have done media interviews in the past, I've never dealt with this kind of volume. I've certainly never before had to worry each day whether my sweater is a good colour for television!

In the end, the experience was nerve-racking but extremely rewarding. I was so pleased to see HSA gain the profile we deserve and I was so proud to publicly represent such a talented and dedicated group of people.

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