



BULLETIN

What's up and what's not with union actions and grievances

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Welcome to new members at Future Focus

HSA welcomes 26 new employees at Future Focus in Campbell River. FutureFocus is a private facility that delivers services at a group home and two day programs for adults with mental disabilities. Most of our new members are community / residential support workers. Bargaining will begin soon for a first collective agreement with CSSEA.

Welcome to new members at Blue Spruce Cottage

HSA welcomes three new members at Blue Spruce Cottage in New Westminster. This is a private long-term care psychiatric care home with 20 beds. The members are registered psychiatric nurses, and will be varied into the Nurses Bargaining Association collective agreement currently under province-wide negotiations.

Welcome to new members at AIDS Resource Centre

A warm welcome to four new members at the AIDS Resource Centre in Kelowna! Three of our new members in the paramedical professional certification at this facility offer client support and educational services to the Okanagan region. HSA also gained a community health services and support certification for one executive assistant. These new members will be varied into existing HEABC contracts.

Ron van der Meer is the new steward. "For us, joining HSA was about job security," he said. "I think it's vital that morale in the office doesn't fluctuate with every decision of the [governing] board. I used to be on the board, and I know that there can be changes in board dynamics. We'd like to have some input into those decisions that affect us as front-line workers."

"Morale in the office affects the people we serve, the community at large ... HIV-positive individuals. And we have to be able to offer the best possible support at all times."

Van der Meer said the multiple stresses of working to improve the lives of HIV-positive people and living with HIV are extraordinary, leaving very little room for added worry about job security and other workplace issues. "There's so much uncertainty for people living with HIV. With the kind of work we do, we have to work hard to maintain our sanity. Unnecessary workplace stress is unacceptable."

He added that he is eager to start working with HSA as part of a progressive union. -I'm personally looking forward to learning more about working with the trade union movement, and appropriate ways of negotiating and lobbying," he said.

Vancouver General Hospital lab reorg issues settled

Supervisory members at Vancouver General Hospital's laboratory have had a difficult time since the hospital's reorganization in the spring of 1997, but they finally got some good news on November 5. After an extensive process and further negotiations, a settlement was reached with regard to numerous outstanding classification disputes, which resulted in a number of members securing a fairly substantial upgrading with retroactivity.

Ron Ohmart, who is responsible for lab issues at HSA, said members are relieved that this settlement was reached. -This agreement brings VGH in line with other employers who have restructured their laboratories over the past few years," he said. -We had significant differences with VGH, and it's important that these have finally been resolved."

Ohmart added that he would like to thank the members at VGH for their patience throughout this period. -Any reorg is extremely stressful," he said, -but this one was particularly so with the number of wage disputes and threatened layoffs. We're glad to have been able to secure some improvements for our members in the end."

Ohmart said he would also like to thank chief steward Walter Adamus, the HSA classifications department ... Kathy McLennan, Sue Carr, and Carol Riviãre... as well as HSA advocate Jeanne Meyers for their part in securing this agreement.

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