

BULLETIN

Change ahead for HSA

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n just four short months, HSA members will elect the unions first new president in 14 years.

As I announced at the 2006 annual convention, I will not be seeking reelection at the 2007 convention.

The role of HSA president has certainly evolved in the unions 35-year history. In particular, significant changes have taken place since 1993 when I was elected into a part-time position, responsible mainly for the functions and responsibilities of chair of the board of directors. Today, in addition to the president holding the unions highest elected position, the job includes management of the more than 50 staff delivering a diverse range of services to members.

Ultimately, the president is responsible for ensuring that the union carries out the mandate of the membership as set through convention and the board of directors. But, what does that mean, really?

As president, I oversee and am responsible for the management and operation of HSA, acting as the conduit between the board of the directors and staff. I work closely on the management team with senior staff to ensure HSAs priorities and objectives are met, including ensuring members receive service that protects and enhances their collective agreement rights.

As the political leader of the union, the president is responsible for chairing the board of directors, and for representing the union in the broader public. A member of the BC Federation of Labour Executive Council, the HSA president is among the leadership of the labour movement in British Columbia, representing the interests of workers on a wide range of issues. The BC Federation of Labour brings together the majority of unions in BC to provide a single voice on workers rights. As well, the Federation provides support to affiliated unions during labour disputes and coordinates cross-union campaigns from health and safety to political action and womens rights.

HSAs president is also the unions representative on the executive board of NUPGE, the National Union of Public and General Employees. NUPGE represents 340,000 members who deliver public services of every description to the citizens of their home provinces, as well as a growing number of private sector workers.

NUPGE monitors provincial and federal labour laws and developments; analyzes restructuring of social programs and public services; reports on and contributes to legislation affecting the workplace; gives members a national presence through participation in the Canadian Labour Congress and internationally through Public Services International; develops and shares successful bargaining strategies with its component unions, and contributes to a national framework of services and solidarity to benefit all Canadian

workers.

While the president has ultimate responsibility for the union, how successful she or he is in representing the membership relies on a strong team of regional directors and professional staff.

At HSA I have learned and grown on the job ... as will my successor. And just as I was fortunate enough to work with regional directors committed to HSA members they represent, and an effective staff who are respected throughout the labour movement, so will your next president be.

This is an exciting time for our union and I am looking forward to the next several months as HSA members consider our unions future. I encourage every member to get involved in this election and take advantage of the opportunities that will be available in the coming months. Consider what the candidates are saying about the future of HSA, discuss the issues with your HSA colleagues, and ensure your chapter is represented at the 2007 convention in April ... when delegates will elect the next president of HSA. 

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