

BULLETIN

## Constructive engagement

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**HSA WORKS TO RAISE THE PROFILE OF THE WORK YOU DO.** That's one of the most important objectives of your union. It's a long-term plan members have asked us to invest in through the advertising campaigns we do every year, and these campaigns are already making a difference.

But the general public is not our only audience. Elected members of BC's Legislative Assembly and their senior staff make decisions that affect your workplace every day. They see our ads, and they see us in the media, but they don't necessarily understand all the ways our members are critical to modern health care and its important to take our message directly to them.

HSA has been ahead of the curve on government relations for years now, thanks in large part to the Constituency Liaison program which sees dozens of members around the province meet with their local MLA to discuss issues of concern to HSA and its members. Now we're ramping these efforts up, working with professional government relations firms to sharpen our message and identify key decision makers in the government and official opposition.

In April, a number of our constituency liaisons and board members travelled to Victoria to participate in a full day of meetings with cabinet ministers, senior government officials, committee members and critics from the official opposition. It was a very successful effort, and we'll be doing more in the future. You can read more about it in the article on page 12.

While negotiating contract improvements for members is our current priority, government members are simply unable to address these concerns away from the negotiating table. Mindful of this, and the need to deliver the same focussed message at dozens of brief meetings over the day, we chose to ask government and opposition members to work with us on reducing wait times for British Columbians by reducing the shortage of health science professionals. Presenting concrete examples and statistics, we were able to make the case that the government could improve health care services and reduce costs by investing in training more health science professionals and working harder to retain the ones currently working in BC.

As with any important work, we can't expect changes overnight, but government and opposition members were genuinely interested in the problems we identified and moved to work with us further. It's just another example of how HSA is using smart and constructive tools to benefit our members and the public. 

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