

BULLETIN

## Five-year tentative agreement reached in community health

December 3, 2013

The Community Health Bargaining Association (CBA) has reached a tentative agreement for the more than 15,000 union members working in the community health sector across the province.

It is a five-year agreement effective April 1, 2014 until March 31, 2019.

"This tentative agreement provides stability for the community health sector for the next five years and takes an important first step in bringing members' wages and benefits in-line with other health care workers doing the same type of work," said HSA President Val Avery.

- [Information package on the tentative agreement](#)

Highlights of the tentative agreement include:

- Wage increases which total 5.5 per cent over five years for all members; with an Economic Stability Dividend in four of the five years providing the possibility for further wage increases dependent on the performance of BC's economy
- Additional wage comparability adjustments totaling 2 per cent over three years for members with occupations similar to those covered by the facilities subsector agreement
- Increased health and welfare benefits to equal benefits in the facilities subsector agreement
  - Examples of benefit improvements include: removal of the pre-existing condition restriction for LTD, Medical Referral Transportation benefits unlimited for a beneficiary's lifetime and increased coverage of hormone-replacement medication
- Increased mileage and meal allowances to the level of the public service agreement
- Maintained current provisions for employment security and protection against contracting out

Also agreed to by the parties is the establishment of a Joint Community Benefits Trust. The jointly-run trust will take over the management and decision-making of community health benefits starting on April 1, 2016.

The joint benefits trust in community health contains the following assurances:

- HEABC will provide \$2.4 million in leveling funds to cover benefit cost increases over the term of the agreement. This way, the trust has the money to maintain benefit levels without increasing costs to members.
- An additional Long Term Disability (LTD) cushion. Though projections show that the leveling funds should more than cover the cost of benefits, the first 2% of increased premium costs caused by increased use will be absorbed by HEABC.

The CBA is led by BCGEU, and includes workers in community health throughout BC represented by HSA, UFCW 1518, HEU, CUPE and others. HSA represents 700 members working in the sector.

BCGEU and other unions entered into early coordinated talks with the Health Employers Association of BC

(HEABC), the Community Social Services Employers' Association (CSSEA) and the provincial government in order to find common ground to reach settlements at three major tables.

## HOW TO VOTE

All HSA members covered by the collective agreement have been mailed an information and voting package via Canada Post. Please ensure you vote promptly and return your double-sealed ballot by mail as soon as possible to ensure it is received in the HSA office in Vancouver by January 31, 2014. If you do not receive a ballot by January 17, 2014, please contact the HSA office and ask to have a new voting package sent to you.

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