

BULLETIN

Q and A: How does the new contract affect my benefits?

February 19, 2014

HSA REPORT, MARCH 2014

BY DENNIS BLATCHFORD

Q: Now that the collective agreement has been ratified, how will HSA go about moving to a joint governance model for delivering health and welfare benefits? And what does it mean in the short-term?

A: Allow me to answer the second question first. It means no change to your health and welfare benefit plan for at least two years. Then, in April 2016, the new Joint Health Sciences Benefit Trust (JHSBT) will be in place. The authorities under the JHSBT will then be then enabled to make changes to your benefit plan. So you will see the same benefit plan for at least the first two years of the new five-year contract extension.

In the meantime, a lot of work needs to be done to create a new governance structure and perform all the due diligence that goes into creating a trust agreement that will guide the decision-making of both the Health Sciences Professionals Bargaining Association and the Health Employers Association of BC. This new structure will have the authority to make modifications and determine all manner of structural and administrative systems to support the delivery of benefits to HSPBA members. At this point it would be premature to speculate what such changes might look like, but the new structure will have the authority to change service providers, investment agents, or introduce new programs in the delivery of these important benefits to members.

Q: I know there were earlier commitments to find significant savings in the benefit plan. How was that resolved?

Yes, there was a commitment to find \$3.8 million in savings in the last round of bargaining that was unresolved. As a condition to agreeing to extend the collective agreement, your bargaining committee felt it was imperative to get rid of this requirement to cut so deeply. In the end we succeeded, and came to an agreement to jointly manage the benefit plans in future.

It should be remembered that the commitment to find the \$3.8 million in savings funded the contract improvements for on-call and shift differential rates that began in January. That commitment put money in the pockets of members and allowed your bargaining team to address some long-standing priorities for members. Now an HSPBA working group will commence the task of designing a valuable and sustainable health and welfare plan that members can rely on. The Report will have much more on this topic as this process unfolds.

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180 East Columbia
New Westminster, BC V3L 0G7

Website
www.hsabc.org

Telephone 604-517-0994
1-800-663-2017