



Down to business

June 25, 2014



HSA REPORT, JUNE 2014

I am deeply honoured to have been elected your president at HSA's 43rd convention in April.

I've been a member of this union for 31 years, and I've served at every level – as an activist, steward, a committee member, a director on the board, as vice-president and most recently as president, appointed under the constitution when Reid Johnson decided to move on last fall.

I believe this experience is valuable, but I know that members are looking for more. These are challenging times for health care and social services, for our unions, and for public employees in all professions. Members like you have a lot riding on the decisions made by your elected leaders, and I want you to know that in addition to my years of experience I share your passion for the patients and clients we serve and I remain connected to the daily struggles of members doing everything they can to deliver quality care despite tight budgets, insufficient staff, and employers who cut corners.

I want you to know that I am going to fight like hell for all of you. It seems I've already developed a reputation for always wanting to get right down to business, and so be it. You didn't elect an entertainer. You elected someone with the experience and passion to make tough choices for the good of all members.

That's why I've directed staff and the board of directors to develop a five-year strategic plan to chart our path forward, through the many challenges ahead of us. The strategic plan will touch on the changing role of labour relations, the opportunities and challenges of new technologies, the growing complexities of disability management, classifications, pensions, benefits, the threat of raids by other unions, the need to build on our efforts to increase our profile with the public and decision-makers in government, political attacks on labour unions, and legal threats to the future of public health care itself.

It's about the future of our union, and the future of your professions. I'm asking every one of you to be a part of it. We'll take the first steps by hearing from union activists at the regional meetings this fall.

I'm looking forward to the debates we will have, the experiences we will share, and the plan we will set to focus our finite resources on what we do best as a union - delivering quality services to our members and protecting the work you do so that we can improve our worksites, the services we deliver, and the communities we live in.

Now, let's get down to business.

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