



HSA joins with BC's unions to provide \$8m loan to support striking teachers

September 10, 2014



HSA President Val Avery at announcement with BC Federation of Labour President Jim Sinclair and BCGEU President Stephanie Smith

Health Sciences Association of BC has committed a \$170,000 interest-free loan to the BC Teachers' Federation to support teachers on strike for a better public education system for BC's children.

The loan is part of the \$8 million pledged by BC's unions and announced today by the BC Federation of Labour.

"BC's teachers are courageously standing up for a public education system that values our children. Health science professionals, registered psychiatric nurses, community health, and community social services workers who are HSA members stand with them," said HSA President Val Avery.

"HSA's board of directors voted late last week to commit \$10 per HSA member to an interest-free loan to support the efforts of teachers who started their strike for improved classroom conditions last June."

"Government keeps talking about 'fairness' in contract negotiations. For the past decade, 'fairness' is not what comes to mind in government's dealings with public sector workers - they unilaterally imposed a two-tiered wage structure on health science professionals, they unilaterally rolled back health support workers' wages by 15 per cent, and they have imposed mandates that make it difficult to negotiate freely," Avery said.

"HSA's health science professionals voted late last year to ratify a five-year agreement with very modest wage increases. Included in that agreement was a "me-too" clause tied to nurses' wages that protects our members from a wage divide that threatens the public health care system's ability to attract and keep the highly educated, skilled, and trained health science professionals British Columbians depend on for their good health," she said.

“We have been there with this government, and we fully support BC teachers in their efforts to work in a very restrictive bargaining climate to achieve the best conditions they can for teaching BC’s children,” she said.

HSA members can support BC’s teachers in other ways, too.

“If you have an hour or two to spend with your teachers on the picket line, I encourage you to join them and show your support,” Avery said.

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