

BULLETIN

## Be skeptical of big, empty promises

October 1, 2014

### THE REPORT, OCTOBER 2014

BY VAL AVERY, PRESIDENT, HSA

In early September, HSA learned that the BC Nurses' Union planned to execute a swift takeover of the Union of Psychiatric Nurses before moving on to actively raid HSA's registered psychiatric nurses.

This means BCNU organizers will be approaching HSA members at work - and likely at home - and trying to get them to sign a BCNU membership card.

Rest assured they will make big promises. I can't even speculate about the misleading tactics they'll employ.

So here are a few facts our RPNs can count on.

RPNs were one of the founding professions of HSA. For over forty years RPNs have received exceptional services, including labour relations advocacy, a dedicated voice for RPNs at the bargaining table, and education opportunities. All for the lowest union dues in the industry.

By contrast, BCNU has for years worked to discredit the RPN profession. They have tried to eliminate their jobs, suppress their voice at the bargaining table, and argue that any nurse can fill a psychiatric position. They discount the specialized training and skills that make RPNs a distinct and accomplished profession.

In HSA, RPNs have a strong voice at the bargaining table. With two independent seats at the Nurses Bargaining Association bargaining table, HSA can speak for RPNs in a sea of RNs. We have only one agenda: to promote the collective agreement issues that matter to RPNs. HSA strives for recognition for specialized training, violence prevention, and mental health promotion.

Last year, HSA's RPN members overwhelmingly rejected BCNU's approaches. They voted to stick with a union that knows and speaks up for registered psychiatric nurses. HSA knows RPNs are more than "just another nurse," and the best way to ensure RPNs have a voice and are recognized for their special nursing skills is to maintain a unique identity.

To our RPN members I say this: when BCNU comes calling, remember the years they spent trying to hold you back and eliminate your profession. How can you believe anything they promise now?

HSA will continue to fight for you. We know that RPNs are essential to the modern health care team.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your steward, our lead Nursing Bargaining Association labour relations officers, or our mobilizing team and be on the look-out for chapter meetings and RPN meetings at your site.

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180 East Columbia  
New Westminster, BC V3L 0G7

Website  
[www.hsabc.org](http://www.hsabc.org)

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