

Convention delegates debate key resolutions, re-elect Avery as HSA president

May 5, 2015



Physiotherapist Val Avery was re-elected to serve as HSA president at a convention attended by over 300 delegates from around BC.

"HSA is the union that has the ability to do great things," Avery told delegates. "Our membership is comprised of highly educated, thoughtful, and articulate professionals. With the support and expertise of our staff we can take on challenges and we can be successful."

"I am grateful you have given me your trust and confidence, and I pledge to earn it every day as we make the changes needed to build a stronger union in challenging times."

Region 2 Director Derrick Hoyt and Region 4 Director Joseph Sebastian also sought the position of president, which has a term of two years. Following the convention the Board of Directors elected Janice Morrison to serve as vice president and John Christopherson as secretary-treasurer.

Delegates also debated a number of resolutions with important implications for HSA members. A resolution calling for member dues to increase from 1.6% to 1.65% was defeated after considerable debate. Proponents suggested the increase was needed to deal with greater demands on servicing members, supporting stewards and defending registered psychiatric nursing members against raiding; those opposed, while agreeing these issues are important, were concerned that any increase in dues requires a more specific plan for deploying the revenue to help members.

Much debate was devoted to proposals for providing more support to stewards; a number of resolutions proposed specifics such as paid time, office space and computer equipment. Delegates agreed to establish a task force to investigate and report back on the greatest needs, best solutions and cost implications.

Several resolutions called for efforts to defend health care and lobby the government for more support for community social services, and HSA will be guided by these as plans for campaigns, collaborations with other

groups and government relations strategy are mapped out.

Among the guest speakers, both BC Federation of Labour President Irene Lanzinger and Canadian Labour Congress Hassan Yussuf reiterated their support for HSA's efforts to protect members from a raid led by the BC Nurses' Union. Referring to the recent Labour Relations Board ruling that BCNU organizers had placed both nurses and patients at risk through raiding activities, Lanzinger and Yussuf assured delegates that they would help confront raiding activity that puts members at risk and drains resources at a time when unions face serious challenges from outside groups.

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