

# THE REPORT

HEALTH SCIENCES ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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## CONVENTION 2016

Choosing to be stronger

# CHOOSING TO BE STRONGER



I AM VERY PROUD OF WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED IN THE LAST 45 YEARS.

I am especially proud of what we have been able to achieve in these last few years.

In the face of governments determined to squeeze our members for every penny, we have adapted, finding ways to achieve security in the face of sweeping change, wage growth in the face of austerity, and protection of hard-won benefits in the face of cuts.

We have made real progress on tackling the issues facing our members – like violence – while pushing for change on the issues that face the people we serve – like funding for programs, minimum wages, and protection of public health care.

In the face of a divided labour movement, where the BCNU now seeks to poach members in all health professions in a senseless grab for power, we are adapting, finding ways to become a more engaged union, mobilizing our members to stand up against those who would undermine our professional relationships and disrupt the health care system.

And in the face of a changing workplace, with more member grievances, more legal challenges, more arbitrations, more disability claims, more appeals every day, we have adapted, finding ways to provide members with more support, on more complex issues, with ever greater expertise.

But we have had to cut corners to meet increasing demands. We have deferred spending on matters that could no longer be

put off.

HSA has not raised dues in 19 years. I'm proud of that. To me that shows we have honoured our responsibility to respect how hard our members work for their dues.

But our members are asking for us to do more. And so we faced a very tough choice.

We could have chosen to do nothing. Our union would survive. But it would be smaller. And it would be weaker. It would be ill prepared for the challenges of the future, never mind the ones we face every day.

Instead, delegates to the May convention chose to support a modest increase in member dues. A choice they did not take lightly.

After much debate and discussion, they chose to adapt to a world very different from that of 19 years ago. To protect members against the predatory BCNU. To provide members with the innovative and specialized support needed in modern labour relations. And to protect members against government that seeks to reduce our pay, cut our benefits and impoverish public health care.

They chose to move forward, fight harder, and make the union stronger.

Not every member will agree. But all will benefit.

“We could have chosen to do nothing. Our union would survive. But it would be smaller. And it would be weaker. It would be ill prepared for the challenges of the future, never mind the ones we face every day.”

Val Avery

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WELCOME TO HSA



Every month, dozens of professionals working at sites across the province join the Health Sciences Association. But unless they attend an orientation session, many know little about their union, and what is done with the dues they pay.

HSA is working to fix that. As part of that effort, we've developed a new video aimed at new members and veterans alike. Featured on HSA's Facebook page and at [hsabc.org/welcome](http://hsabc.org/welcome), the short video features members talking about how HSA is structured, how it makes democratic decisions, and provides members with opportunities to get involved.

It's one more way we're working together to build a more engaged union.

## UPDATE ON CBA COMPARABILITY INCREASES

INCREASES WILL HELP NARROW THE GAP WITH FACILITIES JOBS

The current Health Services and Support Community Subsector collective agreement gives approximately 80 per cent of the FTEs (full time equivalents) in the Community Subsector comparability increases of 1 per cent as of April 2016, 0.5 per cent in April 2017 and 0.5 per cent in April 2018. These increases will narrow the gap between Community jobs and higher paid Facilities jobs doing the same or similar work, and which have comparable benchmarks.

The process of determining which classifications will receive comparability increases is ongoing. The Community Bargaining Association and Health Employers Association of British Columbia were unable to agree on all of the classifications to be included. There was also no agreement on which Facilities benchmarks were appropriate for nine of the classifications brought forward for possible inclusion. The issue was submitted to arbitrator Vince Ready in mid-December and HSA has been reviewing his decision.

Ready's decision only addressed the appropriate benchmarks for the specific classifications. It did not address which Community classifications would receive the increases. The CBA continues to work with HEABC to reach agreement and have the comparability increases implemented. While the process was not completed in time for the April implementation date, the increase will be retroactive to the first full pay period after April 1, 2016.

Once agreement between the HEABC and CBA has been reached we will advise members of which classifications will receive the comparability monies.

Notwithstanding the delay in the application of the April 2016

comparability increase, the April 2016 general wage increase has proceeded as scheduled. All members received the 0.5 per cent general wage increase that was applied in the first full pay period after April 1, 2016.

## HSA LAUNCHES LOCAL LEADERSHIP TRAINING

ADAPTING TO A CHANGING WORLD AND CHOOSING TO BE A STRONGER, MORE INNOVATIVE UNION.

The HSA Local Leadership Training program will provide members with cutting-edge training and professional skills to improve HSA workplaces, protect our professions and build a stronger union.

HSA members face increased pressure from governments and employers, attacks on our members' professional integrity from the leadership of the BCNU and health care funding cuts from our provincial and federal governments.

These crises provide an opportunity for HSA to innovate, grow capacity and build power. The diversity and the professionalism of HSA members is our strength.

HSA has partnered with Organize BC, the leading progressive change agent in BC, on a series of training and capacity-building programs for members across BC. Participants will learn about the five foundational leadership practices and how to use those tools to improve HSA workplaces.

The first union-paid training will be taking place at the HSA Office in New Westminster, BC on June 27-28. Additional training opportunities will be scheduled this fall. You can apply at [hsabc.org](http://hsabc.org). For more information please contact Jonny Sopotniuk, HSA Communications and Organizing Officer at [jsopotniuk@hsabc.org](mailto:jsopotniuk@hsabc.org) or by phone at 778-866-0542.



DERRICK HOYT



JOE SEBASTIAN



KEVIN TOWHEY



NANCY HAY

## REGIONAL DIRECTOR ELECTIONS

In 2016, HSA members in Regions 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 were encouraged to put their name forward for election as Regional Directors.

The Board of Directors meets quarterly, and directors take an active leadership role in representing the union.

To be eligible, members must be employed in a chapter and have been a member of HSA for at least one year immediately prior to election. Elections in Regions 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9 will be held in 2017.

### REGION 2

Derrick Hoyt has been re-elected to serve another two-year term. Hoyt is a pathologist's assistant at Royal Jubilee Hospital.

Hoyt first joined the union's board of directors in November 2013. He has served on the Constitutional and Organizational Policy Committee (COPS) and Committee for Equality and Social Action and Elections Committee. He is a former Chief Steward at Royal Jubilee Hospital.

The other candidate was Anna Morton, a social worker at Queen Alexandra Centre for Children's Health.

### REGION 4

HSA members in Region 4 have

re-elected Joseph Sebastian to serve another two-year term. Sebastian is a medical radiation technologist at Vancouver Hospital.

Sebastian first joined the union's Board of Directors in April 2014. He has served on the Occupational Health and Safety and Constitutional and Organization Policy committees, and has served as a steward at Vancouver Hospital.

The other candidate for the board position was Sarah Chapple, a social worker at Vancouver Hospital.

### REGION 6

HSA members in Region 6 have elected Nancy Hay to serve a two-year term. Hay is a social worker at St. Paul's and Lions Gate Hospitals.

This is Hay's first term on the union's Board of Directors. She currently serves as the Chief Steward at St. Paul's Hospital.

The other candidate for the board position was Shirley Clarkson, a registered psychiatric nurse at St. Paul's Hospital.

### REGION 8

HSA members in Region 8 have elected Kevin Towhey to serve a two-year term as their representative on the union's Board of Directors. Towhey is a medical

radiation technologist at Royal Inland Hospital.

This is Towhey's first term on the union's Board of Directors. He currently serves as the Chief Steward at Royal Inland Hospital.

The other candidate for the board position was Cherylee Hale, a cardiology technologist at Kelowna General Hospital.

### REGION 10

Mandi Ayers will return to represent HSA members in Region 10 on the HSA Board of Directors. She was acclaimed after the deadline passed with no further nominations.

Ayers has served on the Women's Rights, Education, Resolutions, and Constitutional & Organization Policy committees.

She is a long-time union activist, having served as Chief Steward, OHS Steward, Member at Large (sitting on both the Resolutions and Education Committees), delegate to the bargaining proposal conferences, and an HSA representative on the Northern Health Authority Violence Prevention committee.

Her two-year term expires at the conclusion of the 2018 HSA Convention.

## PHSA LABOUR ADJUSTMENT PLAN COMPLETED

APRIL IMPLEMENTATION ENDS UNCERTAINTY IN LABS

HSA members working in Provincial Health Services Authority labs have faced uncertainty for the last year. That has now come to an end, after protracted and thorough negotiations on a workplace restructuring plan that protects staff and ensures continued quality of patient care.

More than one year after PHSAserved Section 54 notice related to an overhaul in the structure of Lower Mainland pathology and laboratory services, PHSAs and Health Science Professional Bargaining Association have finalized the bulk of the work required for the labour adjustment plan, with implementation begun early April.

The process included a technical leadership job fair earlier this year, in which 130 medical laboratory technologists in PHSAs participated.

The outcome of the job fair is that medical laboratory technologists remain at their own worksite in comparable or promoted positions in all but a few cases. Where the position was changed to a lower grade, the members were red-circled, and their wage rates protected.

Any leadership vacancies unfilled through the job fair process will now be posted. In addition there will be some grade 1 positions posted at some sites to account for areas where leadership positions were previously a combination of leadership duties and grade 1 duties.

HSA staff and stewards will continue to work with members on any unanticipated impacts

## WEST COAST IMAGING REACHES TENTATIVE AGREEMENT FOR NEW CONTRACT

IN EARLY JUNE HSA'S BARGAINING COMMITTEE REACHED A TENTATIVE AGREEMENT WITH WEST COAST MEDICAL IMAGING.

HSA represents almost 200 members working in diagnostic imaging clinics in the Vancouver and Victoria regions.

The tentative four-year agreement includes modest wage increases, improvements to sick leave and vacation provisions, and an agreement on a process on issues related to casuals' seniority rights.

Union bargaining committee members Gary Finnerty and Fran Wagner from the Lower Mainland and Lee McKellar and Jenn Frost from Victoria, along with HSA staff negotiators Dani Demetlika and Gurleen Sahota and labour relations specialist Jessica Magalios, began negotiations at the end of April.

HSA surveyed all WCMI members last winter about priorities for bargaining, and the bargaining committee developed proposals based on the issues identified by members. Bargaining opened with proposals for comprehensive changes in collective agreement language to address members' concerns. In addition, the parties have agreed to work collaboratively to resolve the issues related to seniority of members who work as casuals.



**YOUR VOICE CAN HELP ACHIEVE A BETTER CANADA PENSION PLAN** With 11 million workers lacking a workplace pension plan, retirement is something all Canadians need to start thinking about today. The Canadian Labour Congress has launched a new campaign to build support for an expanded CPP as the best best solution for Canadians retiring now and in the future. Speak up at [abetterplanforall.ca](http://abetterplanforall.ca)

## GET READY FOR THE PROVINCIAL ELECTION

THE OUTCOME OF THE MAY 2017 PROVINCIAL ELECTION WILL HAVE A HUGE IMPACT ON HSA MEMBERS, AND THE PATIENTS AND CLIENTS WE SERVE.

“HSA is a non-partisan union, and proudly so,” says HSA President Val Avery.

“But that doesn’t mean we won’t warn our members – or the public – about dangerous, short-sighted policies proposed by governments of any stripe.”

That’s why HSA members may apply for support from HSA’s Political Action Fund to work on election campaigns, attend election campaign training, or even run for political office.

The funding can only be used if the member running for office

– or the candidate with whom the member is working – can demonstrate support for all five of the following criteria, as set by HSA members:

1. A positive role for the public sector;
2. The principles set out in the Canada Health Act;
3. Free collective bargaining for public sector employees;
4. Progressive occupational health and safety legislation; and
5. Progressive human rights.

Members may apply for paid time off work to run or work on campaigns, as a single 30 day block, or for several shorter periods totalling up to 30 days. Campaign work is already starting in many areas, and members

may apply for support to start participating in this work at any time.

Members may also apply for paid time off work and expenses to attend approved election campaign training.

“In these times of austerity we must be prepared to stand up for public health care,” says Avery. “Who better than us, who witness the struggles of our patients and clients as the systems we work for fail to meet their needs.

“There’s an election coming, here in BC. And we will be watching very, very carefully.”

Political Action Fund applications are posted on the HSA website. For more information, contact Carol Riviere at [criviere@hsabc.org](mailto:criviere@hsabc.org).

# NURSES RATIFY NEW AGREEMENT

NURSES COVERED BY THE NURSES BARGAINING ASSOCIATION (NBA) CONTRACT, INCLUDING THE 900 REGISTERED PSYCHIATRIC NURSES REPRESENTED BY HSA, HAVE VOTED 85 PER CENT IN FAVOUR OF ACCEPTING A NEW COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT.

HSA's priority at the bargaining table was to be a strong voice for RPNs. In spite of a process by the lead union, the BC Nurses Union (BCNU), that resulted in few opportunities for HSA bargaining representatives – or any bargaining committee members from any union – to advocate for members, HSA representatives – Chief Negotiator Dani Demetlika and member representative Larry Bryan, an RPN at Haro Park Lodge – took those opportunities to ensure that RPNs had a dedicated voice at the table.

The bargaining team identified some concerns in the agreement, including the loss of qualification differential for new nurses entering employment with a Bachelors degree, the failure of the violence prevention program to include evaluation of violence prevention plans for high/medium risk affiliates sites with Alzheimer units, and the increase in hours required under casual availability.

In spite of those shortcomings, it features wage increases for all nurses, some changes to benefits coverage, and a number of contract changes that address staffing issues, education, and violence in the workplace.

**While there were few opportunities for HSA representatives to advocate for members, the new contract features wage increases, some changes to benefits coverage and a number of changes that address staffing issues, education and violence in the workplace.**

## ACHIEVEMENTS

The tentative agreement achieves eight of the 11 priorities HSA's RPNs set for bargaining, including:

- addressing the shortcomings of the Pharmacare tie-in which reduced drug coverage for nurses
- wage increases
- maintaining benefits
- recognizing the full scope of practice for RPNs
- expanding the definition of “family”
- addressing violence prevention
- addressing workload through on-call language
- addressing LTD coverage

The Board of Directors of the Health Sciences Association recommended that HSA's RPNs vote yes to support the tentative agreement. It addresses many of the issues the bargaining committee representatives were asked to pursue, and ends the uncertainty for many members who expressed frustration about working in a collective agreement that had been expired for more than two years.

## CONCERNS

While the tentative agreement provides contract improvements for nurses and attempts to consolidate the nursing team by offering a dollar an hour enticement to licensed practical nurses five years later than promised, elements of the collective agreement are troubling for the health care system as a whole, as they serve to create divisions between nurses and the rest of the modern health care team – particularly in the area of violence prevention.

In addition, while the NBA has committed to paying up to \$5 million from its member-funded retiree benefits fund to cover any shortfalls in benefits coverage for the duration of the contract, there remains uncertainty about the level of benefits coverage into the future. A change to a Blue Rx formulary is an improvement from the current Pharmacare tie-in, but control over coverage continues to remain with the employer, with no input from the union.

HSA's Board of Directors is also concerned about aspects of the tentative agreement that potentially limit access for RPNs to education funds and policy development discussions.

## LABOUR RELATIONS BOARD THROWS OUT BCNU APPLICATION TO RAID PSYCHOLOGISTS AND PSYCHOMETRISTS

ON APRIL 12, BC'S LABOUR RELATIONS BOARD DENIED BCNU'S APPLICATION TO RAID PSYCHOLOGISTS AND PSYCHOMETRISTS.

The raid would have undermined the professional relationship between registered nurses and health science professionals and destabilized labour relations in BC's hospitals. The decision was welcomed by HSA and Professional Employees Association (PEA), the two unions that represent psychologists and psychometrists in BC's public health care system.

The LRB dismissed BCNU's recent application to move some psychologists and psychometrists (testing technicians) into their union – a practice known as raiding. The raiding application followed on a continued campaign by the BCNU to grow its membership by poaching members from other unions.

“The BC Nurses' Union leader-

ship has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars trying to wrestle members out of other unions,” said HSA President Val Avery. “It's hurting the relationship between health care professionals and it's wasting the dues provided by hard-working nurses.”

“The decision has come to the relief of our members who reported being misled by the BCNU organizers,” said PEA Executive Director Scott McCannell.

“The decision is a strong message that the BCNU's latest raiding tactics will not be tolerated. This ruling provides stability in the health sector and will ultimately result in better patient care,” said McCannell.

The Labour Relations Board found that the application by the BC Nurses Union would result in a proliferation of unions representing health science professionals in the health care system – which would serve to disrupt rather than improve

labour relations representation for health care workers at the worksite.

“I have been a member of BC's health care team for more than 30 years. As HSA's president, my focus is on ensuring that team is supported so that they can best serve the patients who count on them every day, instead of defending against another union's predatory organizing tactics that do absolutely nothing to support the more than 70 per cent of working people in BC who do not have the advantage of the support a union contract provides,” Avery said.

“We want to thank the other health care unions who serve members in BC's health care system – HEU, CUPE and BCGEU – for intervening in this case and supporting our two unions' work to uphold labour relations practices that promote stable and effective union representation in the public health care system,” Avery added.

## ANTI-RAID TASK FORCE LAUNCHED

AT THE HSA CONVENTION IN MAY, DELEGATES PROPOSED AN EMERGENCY RESOLUTION IN RESPONSE TO THE ONGOING RAIDS ON HSA MEMBERS FROM THE LEADERSHIP OF THE BC NURSES' UNION (BCNU).

The ongoing raids have strained union resources and have undermined the collaborative approach that all other unions in the health sector enjoy. The HSA

is committed to finding a collaborative and respectful solution, but BCNU leadership to date has been unwilling to find solutions and to work together.

At the HSA convention members shared their experiences about how the raiding actions of the BCNU leadership have put workers and patients at risk and created difficult work environments between nurses and other health professionals of the modern health team.

Delegates overwhelming supported the anti-raid emergency resolution. The resolution called for the creation of an interdisciplinary task force to protect all HSA members and disciplines from hostile raids.

To get involved in the anti-raid task force please fill out the online interest form. For more information please contact Jonny Sopotiuk, HSA Communications and Organizing Officer at [jsopotiuk@hsabc.org](mailto:jsopotiuk@hsabc.org) or by phone at 778-866-0542.



# CONVENTION 2016





## NEW RESOURCES FOR STEWARDS

Delegates were given an advance view of a new online steward resource package that will be rolled out soon.

Developed by HSA information technology staff after extensive consultation with stewards, directors and members around the province, and modeled in part on the highly-effective En-

hanced Disability Management Program software, the steward portal aims to provide stewards with easier access to records and expertise, streamlined paperwork and collaboration tools.

“Stewards are facing greater demands on their time, even as the employer is making it harder to find that time,” said HSA

President Val Avery.

“That’s why we have spent the last year working to provide better support for stewards, and reduce wait times for members who need help.”

## EXTRAORDINARY RESOLUTIONS

Delegates debated and approved three “extraordinary” resolutions – matters that came up after the formal deadline for resolutions but were considered urgent enough to merit debate.

With the devastating Fort McMurray fires still burning, delegates voted for a donation of \$5,000 to the Canadian Red Cross – to be matched by the federal government – to support Alberta residents. HSA Alberta members were among the health care workers who worked to evacuate patients from the local hospital, making difficult choices about whether to be

with patients or their families.

Kat Lanteigne of Bloodwatch Canada addressed the convention about private companies seeking to establish pay-for-plasma clinics. In Canada, only two provinces have specifically forbidden paying for plasma, this in spite of the recommendation from the Krever Inquiry that blood donation be protected as a not-for-profit public resource following the tainted blood scandal that infected more than 30,000 Canadians with HIV and hepatitis C due to contaminated blood and blood products. Delegates unanimously passed

a resolution committing HSA to work to urge the BC government to ban all paid-blood product donations, and for the federal government to legislate a national ban on all paid-blood product donations.

Delegates also passed a resolution directing the union to defend members from hostile takeover attempts through raiding. A task force has been struck to facilitate member involvement in continued organizing of the health and community social services professionals HSA represents (see page 11).



## MAKING A TOUGH CHOICE

Delegates to convention participated in an extensive debate about the proposal to raise dues to meet the growing needs of members and stewards. Here's what some of them had to say.

"Disability management services have been on such high demand from this union. Our numbers at just Vancouver Coastal has exploded for disability. The files are much more complex. They require accommodation, labour relations support. These files are pretty messy. And we also have a lot of people who apply for LTD and are denied. And they have to appeal. And they have to rely on the expertise at the office for that support. And there's a waitlist. A waitlist for members to get that support right now. For those members it's a long time to wait, a long time with any pay. I want to see that improved, and have more support for them."

NADINE SOUKOREFF, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST, VANCOUVER

"When is a good time to have an increase in dues? There's not going to be a good time. Ever. It's always going to be tough. It's appropriate for us to take some leadership, and let's keep improving and enhancing our services rather than cutting them."

PAM HOSIE, SOCIAL WORKER, VICTORIA

"I know it's not an easy decision to make, but in 2004 I had a major health problem and I had to go on long term disability. And I'm thinking that when you need the service, it's great to have. I think we need to support the members who need help, and if that means a due increase I totally support it."

LYNN OTTOSON, REGISTERED PSYCHIATRIC NURSE, RICHMOND

"WCB used to be an agency designed to get people back to work. That's no longer so. I can tell you from personal experience, going through and dealing with them, they want to get you back to work as quickly as possible regardless of you ability to do so. That puts our livelihoods at risk. That brings lawyers. That brings cost. So if you have members asking where this dues money is going, there's an answer. Become a steward, go to the office, and learn about it."

TREVOR WHYTE, RESPIRATORY THERAPIST, SURREY



## DELEGATES SUPPORT FIRST DUES INCREASE IN 19 YEARS

Confronted with increasing demand for member services, support for stewards facing growing caseloads and the mounting cost of defending members against hostile raids by the BC Nurses Union, delegates to convention voted overwhelmingly in favour of a small dues increase, the first in 19 years.

Almost 300 delegates, each elected by local members, debated and ultimately supported plans to increase services and support to members and a new package of technological tools to help stewards streamline processes and reduce waiting time for union services like assistance with long-term disability and grievances. The increase in dues from 1.60% to 1.85% of gross pay will be effective July 15, 2016. This will bring HSA dues rates in line with BCGEU, and still at a lower rate than HEU (2.1%) and BC Nurses (2%).

For members earning \$20,000, the increase amounts to about \$1.90 per pay cheque; if you earn \$40,000, it is about \$3.80 per paycheque, and if you earn \$60,000, about \$5.75 per pay

cheque. Union dues are tax deductible.

President Val Avery thanked delegates for supporting the Board of Directors' proposal for the first increase in dues since 1997.

"A lot has changed in 19 years," said Avery. "Labour relations has become more professionalized and more complex. The number of members asking the union for help with appeals, grievances, arbitrations and legal matters is growing every year. We face governments determined to reduce our pay, cut our benefits and impoverish public health care and community social services. And we face relentless attacks from a union using the dues of hard-working nurses to poach our members and undermine the solidarity of the modern health care team."

"A smaller, weaker union is not the answer to these challenges. It's time to adapt, as we have in the past, and become a stronger, more engaged union, with the flexibility to fight on many fronts."

**"A smaller, weaker union is not the answer to these challenges. It's time to adapt, as we have in the past, and become a stronger, more engaged union, with the flexibility to fight on many fronts."**



HSA PRESIDENT VAL AVERY PRESENTS ALLEN PETERS WITH THE DAVID BLAND AWARD

## ALLEN PETERS RECEIVES 2016 DAVID BLAND AWARD

HSA member David Bland was a vocational counsellor who worked at Richmond Mental Health Services. At the end of an otherwise ordinary workday in January of 2005, as David left his workplace and walked to his car, a former client was waiting in the parking lot - and fatally stabbed David.

The events of that day sent shock waves through the industry and exposed the reality of how our workplaces, while usually places of comfort and care, can also cause serious - and even fatal - injuries to workers.

This award was created to commemorate David Bland and also to recognize the tremendous amount of on-going, every day work hundreds of HSA health and safety activists engage in to make sure health, safety and violence prevention programs are in place and effective in all HSA workplaces.

A traumatic event such as David's death can be a wake-up call for action, but beyond that

- it's a call to ensure workplace safety is an ongoing, everyday process that doesn't end. It's a job that requires persistence, stamina and a deep concern for fellow workers.

Allen Peters made a decision more than 27 years ago to become active in health and safety and has been carrying on that work ever since. This has been in addition to his job as a medical radiation technologist at Nicola Valley General Hospital, as an environmental activist and as a deeply involved union member.

In 2009, Allen was awarded the David Bland Award for his role as a health and safety educator for the Occupational Health and Safety Agency for Healthcare in BC, which he carried out from the time OHSAH was established in 1999 until it was dismantled by the provincial government in 2010.

When OHSAH was disbanded and Allen's education role there ended, his commitment to health and safety continued.

Since then he has continued to represent the union on the Interior Health Regional Violence Prevention Committee and his workplace joint occupational health and safety committee. As Allen moves towards a much deserved retirement, he will also be ending his latest term as chair of HSA's Provincial OHS Committee.

Over these many years of activism Allen has mentored countless HSA members who have taken up the fight for workplace safety. Thanks in large part to Allen's efforts and the ground-work he has laid, those members are now better equipped to take on roles as workplace health and safety leaders and to continue on with Allen's work and the work of others. HSA's convention delegates recognized that continuing work by presenting the David Bland award to Peters for a second time.

# 2016 SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES

HSA provides members and their children with several scholarships and bursaries for education. Scholarships are adjudicated by the union's education committee. Applications for 2017 will be accepted beginning in January 2017. Check [hsabc.org](http://hsabc.org) for details.

## \$1000 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

**Jessica Banasch**, child of Laurie Banasch, occupational therapist, Cowichan Lodge

**Mateo Lee Bernaldez**, child of Angela Lee Bernaldez, orthopedist staff, Royal Jubilee Hospital

**Hayley Elizabeth Carolan**, child of Eileen Carolan, dietitian, Nanaimo Regional General Hospital

**Marissa Davie**, child of Donna Davie, pharmacist, Langley Memorial Hospital

**Ashley Jacob**, child of Joe Jacob, pharmacist, Langley Memorial Hospital

**Joel Harry Lecky**, child of Doria Bellows, physiotherapist, BC Children's Hospital

**Emily Morris**, child of Paula Morris, physiotherapist, Vancouver General Hospital

**Kristin Laura Schneck**, family counsellor, Cameray Counselling Centre

**Nina Underhill**, child of Diane Underhill, dietitian, Surrey Memorial Hospital

**Matthew Ryan Yep**, child of Angela Lynn Yep, laboratory technologist, BC Children's Hospital

First runner-up: **Ian Parfett**, child of Susan McMillan, social worker, Ridge Meadows Hospital

Second runner-up: **Tyson Que-rengesser**, child of Neal Que-rengesser, anesthesia assistant, Vancouver General Hospital

## \$1000 BURSARY AWARDS

**Alyssa Dalip**, child of Susan Dalip, medical laboratory technologist, Lions Gate Hospital.

**Erin Kirsten Dohlen**, radiation technologist, Kelowna General Hospital

**Sophie Harvey**, child of Mara Harvey, radiation technologist, Richmond Hospital

**Taylor Dayne Hodding**, child of Erin Whiteford, radiation technologist, Cowichan District Hospital

**Joshua Thomas Holland**, child of Karen Holland, laboratory technologist, Penticton Regional Hospital

**Alexandra Suzanne Janke**, child of Danielle Tessier, speech/language pathologist, Campbell River Hospital

**Kamaljit Johal**, support worker, Kettle Friendship Society

**Kurtis and Megan Jong**, children of Darcy Jong, recreation therapist, Kelowna General Hospital

**Furqana Khan**, child of Jameel Khan, laboratory technologist, University Hospital of Northern BC

**Kaelyn Devi Kumar**, child of Alice Kumar, radiation technologist, Surrey Memorial Hospital

**Taylor Shai Main**, child of Karen Main, laboratory technologist, Mission Memorial Hospital

**Margot Merinsky**, social worker, Centre for Ability

**Karoline Moore**, child of Barbara Moore, respiratory therapist, Lions Gate Hospital

**Lauren Shandley**, radiation technologist, Royal Columbian Hospital

**Pyper Catherine Smith**, child of Keri Smith, radiation therapist, BCCA Vancouver Cancer Centre

**Aneal Thandi**, child of Raman-deep Thandi, health records administrator, Surrey Memorial Hospital

**Justin Van Heek**, child of Kim Van Heek, occupational therapist, Ridge Meadows Child Development Centre

**Jared Rinaldi Wilman**, child of Claudia Rinaldi, laboratory technologist, Chase Health Centre

**Ty Wright**, child of Margot Wright, recreation therapist, Columbia View Lodge

First runner-up: **Kellen Sean Duckworth**, child of Gina and Trevor Duckworth, radiation therapists, BCCA Cancer Centre for South Interior

Second runner-up: **Glen Makiri**, social worker, St. Paul's Hospital

## \$500 PART-TIME BURSARY AWARDS

**Sarah Anne Rose Buston**, child of Jacqueline Buston, pharmacist, BCCA Vancouver Island Cancer Centre

**Romel Almendral Canlas**, radiation therapist, BCCA Abbotsford Cancer Centre

**Shannon Knight**, respiratory therapist, Cowichan District Hospital

**Manu Manraj Singh Nijjar**, physiotherapist, Burnaby Hospital

## \$1000 ABORIGINAL BURSARY AWARDS

**Charlene Hickey**

**Brianna Hiebert**

First runner-up: **Rachelle MacDonald**

# OHS CONFERENCE EXAMINES MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN WORKPLACE

ACTIVISTS FROM AROUND THE PROVINCE GATHERED IN EARLY JUNE FOR A CONFERENCE ON OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY.

The OHS conference provided an opportunity for OHS and Enhanced Disability Management Stewards to come together, share experiences and find solutions to health, safety and injury prevention concerns in their workplaces. Seventy-five activists spent time in plenary sessions and workshops discussing a wide range of issues important to HSA members.

Participants were encouraged to review the effectiveness of their joint occupational health and safety committees by ensuring that:

- committee members are properly engaged in incident investigations;
- all sites have disaster and emergency plans in place;
- all committee members are accessing the education they are entitled to in order to properly fulfil their roles;

Several members provided examples of innovative projects they're involved with in response to specific workplace needs, including high injury rates among cardiac sonographers in Victoria, a violence risk assessment for Providence Health's Inner City Youth Program, and dealing with mental injury in stressful and sometimes violent community settings.

## PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

What was the single most valuable thing you learned at the conference?

- "Reporting injuries. Don't wait to hit the wall before doing something about your situation."
- "Lots of places to go for resources, just being a forum to ask questions."
- "Need to get education out to members on mental wellness and the importance of record/data collection to help claims."

Presentations from WorkSafeBC Manager of Industry Services, Stephen Symon and HSA Workers Compensation Board Advocate Natalia Bryant reviewed the statistics and trends related to mental disorder claims and complaints of harassment and bullying.

Nearly one-third of mental injury claims received by the WCB come from the health and social services sector, even though our sector represents less than 12 per cent of the total BC workforce. In 2015 more than 2000 work-related mental injury claims were filed from health-care workers. Increasing costs due to workplace mental injury have forced employers and governments to acknowledge that psychological health and safety is an important workplace issue.

The final portion of the conference was set up to provide guidance on the implementation of Resolution 58, recently adopted at the 2016 HSA Con-

vention. That resolution has the following goals:

- raise awareness about workplace causes of mental injury;
- pursue measures to prevent mental injury, including working to have all employers adopt the Canadian Standards Association national standard on psychological health and safety;
- continue to support members experiencing mental illness and injury,

This resolution is based on an understanding that HSA has a role to play in ensuring employers provide a psychologically healthy and safe workplace – one that promotes psychological well-being with systems in place to prevent harm to employee psychological health due to neglect, reckless or intentional acts. Direction provided by conference participants will greatly enhance the union's ability to meet these goals.

If you have a question or concern about occupational health and safety, contact [ddurning@hsabc.org](mailto:ddurning@hsabc.org).

# ARE PENSION PLAN BENEFITS GUARANTEED?

YOUR PENSION PLAN'S TRACK RECORD ON PROTECTING BENEFITS LIKE DENTAL IS STRONG. BUT AN INCREASINGLY WEIRD WORLD MAY REQUIRE FLEXIBILITY.

**I have been following the recent announcement that our pension plan is making changes to retiree benefits in 2017 - including eliminating subsidies for dental coverage. As someone planning to retire in about 10 years, I'm wondering if I can count on benefits still being available when I retire. If not, I may have to adjust my retirement horizon to compensate for additional expenses in retirement.**

First off, I think it's good that you're starting to think about these things now. As you know from the announcement, retiree benefits are provided on a non-guaranteed basis and are subject to changes depending on available funding. This does mean that by the time you are ready to retire in decade or so, the benefit plan could be quite different than the one in place today. Available funding is simply that; the costs of the benefits can't exceed the amount of money coming into the benefits account on a yearly basis.

As the plan "matures", the ratio between active members and retired members begins to shrink. This accelerates pres-

sure on the funding envelope, particularly in combination with rising benefit costs and the trend for retirees to live longer - especially BC retirees who lead the nation in longevity.

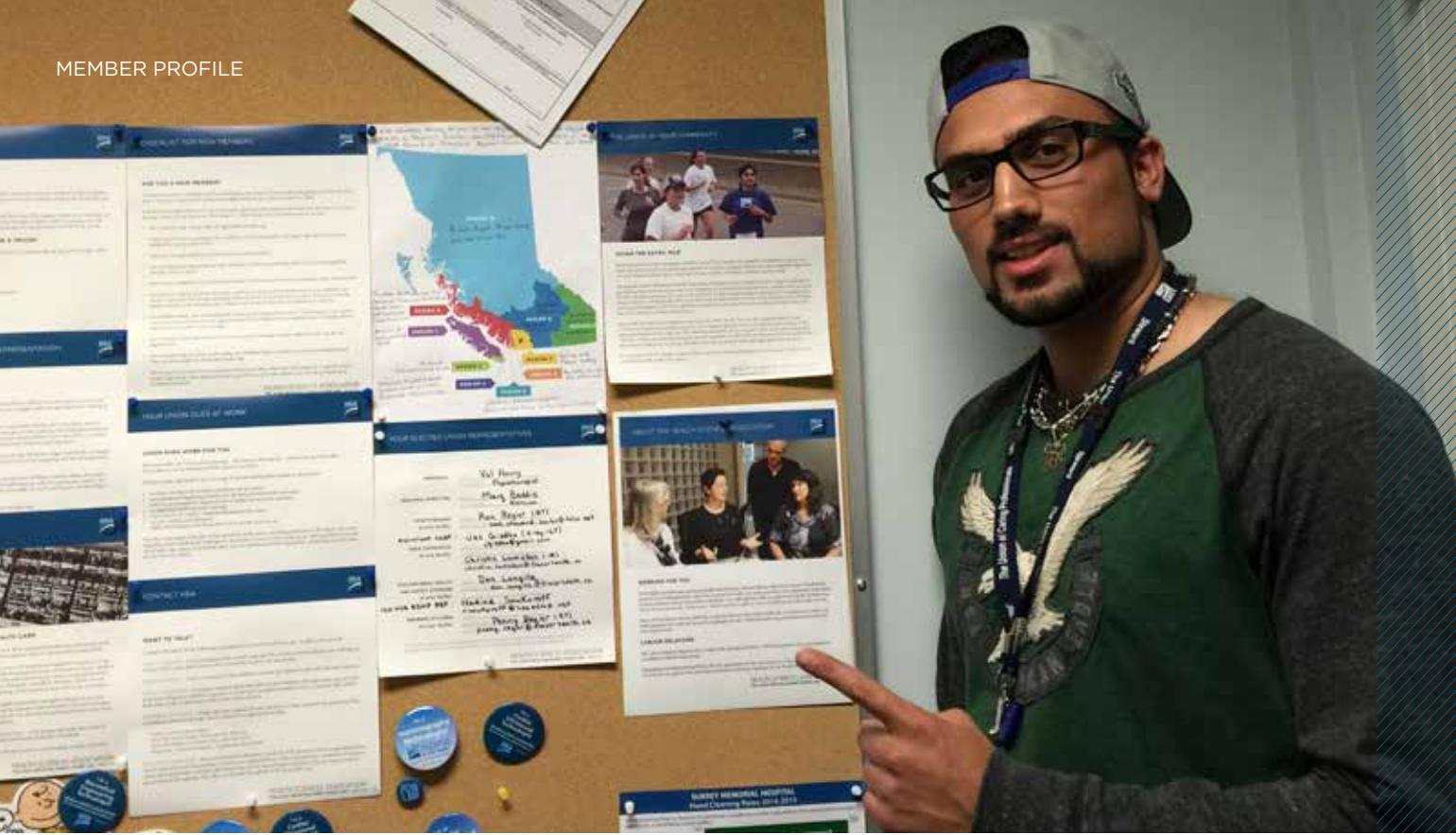
Having said that, these changes are all about extending the benefit program so that younger plan members, like you, can rely on having a decent benefit plan when you decide to retire. So far, the benefit program has worked out amazingly well considering that funding limitations were hard-wired into the program right from the beginning. And importantly, retirees have received these benefits while suffering no loss to inflation protection. So this balancing act - diverting a portion of the employer's inflation contributions to fund benefits, while still granting full cost of living increases - has turned out to be a big success.

**So are you saying I have nothing to worry about?**

No, I'm not saying you are worry-free. What I am saying is that for nearly 25 years the plan has provided valuable benefits to retired plan members, and, there is an on-going commitment by

trustees to keep the program going as long as possible. But as recent history has shown us, financial shocks can change everything. For instance, if we were to have runaway inflation, it would result in the benefit program being stripped down - if not taken away entirely - to protect retiree incomes. I don't think it's likely to happen, but like a Donald Trump presidency, you can't rule it out completely either.

If you have a question or concern about pensions, contact [dblatchford@hsabc.org](mailto:dblatchford@hsabc.org).



GIDDHA IS JUSTIFIABLY PROUD OF THIS BULLETIN BOARD, HAVING PUSHED FOR THREE MONTHS TO GET PERMISSION TO PUT IT UP AS PART OF HIS EFFORTS TO INCREASE THE UNION'S VISIBILITY IN THE WORKSITE.

# JAS GIDDHA

## MEDICAL RADIATION TECHNOLOGIST, MAN OF ACTION

**BY LAURA BUSHEIKIN**

“MY GOAL IS PRETTY SIMPLE: TO MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE IN ANY WAY I CAN,” SAYS JAS GIDDHA, A MEDICAL RADIATION TECHNOLOGIST AT SURREY MEMORIAL.

This goal fuels Giddha’s work, his HSA involvement, and his many other volunteer activities.

In fact, Giddha has been making “a positive difference in any way he can” since his teens. In high school in Williams Lake, where Giddha grew up, he volunteered as a peer tutor – while also graduating as a top three

student in the school district, working at the local sawmill, and pursuing a black belt in Tae Kwon Do. He also coached elementary school sports teams, volunteered at William’s Lake Seniors’ Centre as a recreation co-ordinator, and was the students’ council president at Thompson Rivers University, where he completed a year of general science and a year of business administration.

Giddha took a break from volunteering while studying for his Medical Radiation Technology diploma at BCIT. Once he graduated, in 2012, and began working at Surrey Memorial, he started looking for opportunities to get involved again. HSA felt like a good fit.

“I thought this would be a good opportunity for me to give back to my co-workers and to improve my workplace,” says Giddha. He talked to his HSA chief steward and within two weeks he was a general steward.

Once he settled into his new role, Giddha set about fixing one of many problems he’d noticed soon after being hired. “When I started working at Surrey Memorial I didn’t even know I was in a union. I’d ask my supervisor or manager about my rights and relied on their answers. A lot of time they’d give me incorrect information. I attended our Fraser Health new members’ orientation session, but there was no union representative. It felt like we didn’t matter.” Clearly, there

# “EVERY NOVEMBER I GROW A FINE MOUSTACHE TO RAISE MONEY FOR PROSTATE CANCER RESEARCH AND AWARENESS.”

was a need for better and more consistent union orientation.

Creating change started with a conversation: “I raised the issue with our chief steward and our HSA labour relations officer. They were not aware of this problem. But we have language in the collective agreement saying that union orientation is mandatory,” says Giddha. He stepped up to resolve the issue and started attending regional health authority orientations and providing orientation kits and information about HSA.

“Also, when I meet stewards at regional meetings I make sure I talk to them about orientation. Even if there is no special orientation day, as a steward you should be introducing yourself and giving members an information package.”

Two years ago, Giddha became assistant chief steward. He’s also a member-at-large for Region 7; constituency liaison for Surrey-Panorama, he’s sat on the resolutions committee, attended

the BC Federation of Labour convention, and, appropriately enough, he recently he played a role in a new video designed to welcome new members as part of an on line orientation kit now available at [hsabc.org/welcome](http://hsabc.org/welcome) (see page 2).

He also volunteers at work, as a hand hygiene auditor and a cultural hub ambassador, promoting workplace values such as accountability, teamwork, clinical excellence, compassion, employee safety, and more.

As well, Giddha is a Platinum Club Mo Bro, which is a designation given to top fundraisers in the Movember Canada initiative. “Every November I grow a fine moustache to raise money for Prostate cancer research and awareness,” says Giddha.

Somehow, Giddha ensures that all this activity still leaves time to focus on his career. In the last few years, he has earned an advanced certificate in Computed Tomography (CT) and completed the BCIT Health Leader-

ship Program with distinction. Currently, he is working towards his certificate in Interventional Radiology and serving the role of a newly elected director on the board of the BC Association of Medical Radiation Technologists.

Looking toward the future, Giddha hopes to move into a higher leadership role. “With more of a leadership role, I’d have more tools to create a positive impact on the department and health care,” he says, staying true to his goal of creating a positive difference in any way he can.

“I feel that everybody should give back somehow. That’s how strong communities are made, how relationships are made. Being raised in a Sikh family, I was taught that giving back, standing up for the weak and against injustice are embedded principles. Also, no one likes a selfish person,” says Giddha, with a laugh.



NADEEM ZIA (CENTRE) MET WITH OVER 500 PAKISTANI PHARMACY STUDENTS AT THE 19TH INTERNATIONAL PHARMACY CONFERENCE IN LAHORE.

# AMBASSADOR FOR PHARMACY

SURREY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL PHARMACIST NADEEM ZIA WAS RECENTLY INVITED AS A GUEST SPEAKER TO THE 19TH INTERNATIONAL PHARMACY CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION IN LAHORE, PAKISTAN.

"I was very interested to go so I started planning the overseas trip," said Zia. "My first challenge was getting vacation time, and the second was the expenses. I was partly sponsored by the Pakistan Pharmacists' Association, so I made the trip. Another challenge was that I was new to Lahore, as I am from Karachi. I'm proud that I overcame all these challenges because the trip was worth it."

Zia studied pharmacy at the University of Baluchistan, in Quetta, Pakistan in 1987. He left Pakistan in 1990, worked eight years in King Faisal Specialist

Hospital and Research Center in Riyadh, then in 1998 moved to Canada with his wife and daughter. After working with Walmart Pharmacy in Mississauga, he moved to Surrey, to work in various community pharmacies before moving to Surrey Memorial Hospital in 2007.

Zia stayed connected with colleagues back home, giving online presentations to universities in Pakistan. This led to an invitation from the Pakistan Pharmacists Association.

The 19th International Pharmacy Conference and Exhibition, a three-day event, had over 2000 pharmacists participating, and more than 12 international guest speakers, including Zia. The topics presented included; public health, pharmacy practise, regulatory affairs, manufacturing and research. Zia presented 'The Role of Pharmacist in Medication Management, a Canadian experience.

"I was invited to a few universities, community pharmacies, and hospitals, and am proud to see the excellent improvement in pharmacy practices, now very similar to Canadian pharmacies."

"I had an excellent experience in such a short time span of eight days where I met over five hundred pharmacy students, practicing pharmacists in various fields, and some old colleagues and classmates. I was surprised to notice most of the participants came to me and introduced themselves saying that they know me from Facebook.

"I shared my Canadian pharmacy practices and learned Pakistani pharmacy practices and their challenges, which include implementation of policies, budgetary challenges, development of pharmacists and procedures in practice and training."



**Name:** Gurleen Singh Sahota

**Longest you have gone without sleep:** There was a 72 hour stretch in law school where I got a total of 4 hours of sleep over that period. With a newborn daughter now my wife and I have come close to that a few times.

**Job title and department:** Legal Counsel, Legal Department

**What you actually do, in your own words:** When push comes to shove and we've exhausted all other options, I argue on behalf of our members in a hearing before an arbitrator (essentially a judge but in a labour law context).

**Why this matters:** Because it ensures that our members' rights are enforced and sometimes you just have to fight for those rights.

**Secret talent unrelated to job:** I can grow a mean beard

**Person you most admire:** I know it's cliché but without a doubt, it's my dad.

**At HSA since:** June 2014

**Job before HSA:** Associate Lawyer at a Union side Labour and Employment law firm in Gastown.

**Scariest situation you've ever been in:** Watching the horror movie the Ring. I had to sleep with the lights on afterwards.

**Interesting thing you did to help a member in the last week:** I was involved in negotiating the withdrawal of discipline from a member's file.

**Your perfect day looks like:** Having a picnic at a park with my family on a nice sunny day and receiving lots of smiles and cuddles from my 4 month daughter.

**TV series you're now watching:** Game of Thrones

**Good or bad:** Great

**Why:** Because you never know what is going to happen and which of your favourite characters may be killed off.



# HEALTH SCIENCES ASSOCIATION

## The union delivering modern health care

HSA's Board of Directors is elected by members to run HSA between Annual Conventions. Members should feel free to contact them with any concerns.

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