



COMMUNITY BARGAINING ASSOCIATION

highlights of the tentative agreement

community health services and support sector

April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2010

Health Sciences Association
The union of caring professionals

Community Health members urged to vote YES!

On Saturday, March 25, 2006, the Community Bargaining Association (CBA) reached an agreement in principle with the Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC) regarding terms and conditions for a new collective agreement.

The HSA Board of Directors and your bargaining committee strongly recommend that you vote YES in favour of the contract. This new agreement includes pay increases, stronger employment security and contracting out protections, and measures to improve health and safety.

The four-year agreement was reached after two months at the bargaining table. It covers 13,000 union members, including health authority administrative staff, health care workers who provide support services in child development centres, mental health group homes, vocational and educational rehabilitation programs, women's transition centres, and drug and alcohol treatment centres.

The tentative agreement provides wage increases of 11 per cent over four years, including a general wage increase of 1.5 per cent, plus a 3.5 per cent special adjustment in 2006 to make up for the wage rollback implemented in 2004; in the subsequent three years, wages will increase by two per cent annually; and additional adjustments for targeted classifications, including Schedulers 1 and 2, and Audiometric Technicians.

Workers covered by the agreement will also receive one-time signing bonuses of up to \$4,200, paid on the basis of \$1.90 per hour for each regular hour worked in the preceding one year period, and 25 cents per hour for recognition of past skills development.

The number of jobs that can be contracted out is capped at 700 FTE's. Severance is now available in circumstances where there are job losses resulting from contracting out, or from the re-tendering of service contracts.



Cindy Stewart, HSA President,
on behalf of the
HSA Board of Directors



Charles Wheat, residential
care worker, on behalf of the
bargaining committee



Lori Horvat, Senior Labour
Relations Officer, on behalf
of the bargaining committee

HSA represents approximately 600 workers in the Community Bargaining Association. Other unions that were part of the talks include the BC Government and Service Employees' Union, the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1518, Hospital Employees' Union, Canadian Union of Public Employees, and the Professional Employees Association. It is expected that the unions' ratification processes will be completed on April 27 with an announcement of the ratification vote results on April 28.

The HSA board of directors is very proud of what our negotiators Lori Horvat, Senior Labour Relations Officer, and Charles Wheat, residential care worker at Dawson Creek CDC, have been able to achieve for members working in community health. We urge you to attend the ratification meeting at your agency where the contract will be discussed in more detail, and we strongly urge you to support this contract by voting YES. □

On Saturday, March 25, 2006, the Community Bargaining Association (CBA) reached an agreement in principle with the Health Employers Association regarding terms and conditions for a new collective agreement. The HSA Board of Directors is recommending acceptance of the new contract, and HSA members will soon be casting their ballots.

Highlights of the new tentative agreement are as follows.

Term

The term of the tentative agreement is four years, from April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2010.

Wage increases and special adjustments

Over the term of the tentative 4-year collective agreement, wages will increase by 11%, as follows:

- On April 1, 2006 members will receive a general wage increase of 1.5% plus a 3.5% special adjustment (as restoration of the 4.06% monies lost in 2004).
- On April 1st in each year of the agreement (2007, 2008 and 2009) members will receive a 2% Increase in pay.

Signing bonus

A one-time signing bonus of up to \$4,200 is available to all regular full-time, part-time and casual workers on the payroll as of March 31, 2006. The bonus payment includes \$3,700 as early signing incentive and \$500 for past skills enhancement.

This combined signing bonus will be paid on the basis of regular hours worked between April 1, 2005 and March 31, 2006 and in the following manner:

- \$1.90 per regular hour worked for the signing bonus; and
- \$0.25 per regular hour worked for past skills enhancement payment.

The \$4200 bonus payment is subject to statutory deductions (such as CRA, CPP and EI).

HSA union dues will *not* be deducted from the lump sum bonus monies.

Members on LTD are eligible for the bonus payment. The Community Bargaining Association has been assured by health employers and the Healthcare Benefit Trust that the LTD plan will not claw back incentive monies paid to employees on claim.

However, those members who have been on maternity or parental leave or on WCB could have some or all of their bonus monies clawed back due to governmental regulation.

The unions are currently investigating ways in which might ensure these members receive their bonus payments without incurring any penalties. Further information will be provided once it is known.

Additional targeted classification adjustments

Effective April 1, 2006, Audiometric Technician 1 classification will move up one pay grade to Grid 8. The Audiometric Technician 2 classification will move up one grade from Grid 9 to Grid 10.

Effective April 1, 2006, Scheduler 1 classification will move up from Grid 8 to Grid 9. Scheduler 2 classification will move up from Grid 9 to Grid 10.

Gains for Red-Circled Employees

Increases in wages and expanded job opportunities for red-circled employees who have had very limited career mobility options or compensatory recognition for a number of years. The new tentative agreement provides pay boosts along with lump-sum adjustments in addition to the signing and skills enhancement bonuses.

This year, wage protected members are to receive increases that restore, in full, the monies clawed back in 2004, along with lump sum special adjustment payments equal to two percent of wages issued quarterly in each of years 2007 and 2008.

Starting April 1, 2006, wage protected members can apply for any vacancy within their health authority employer and if appointed, can port their protected wage rates, seniority and benefits. There no longer will be financial penalties for wage protected employees who choose to bid on vacant jobs.

Superior benefits

Existing hours of work and scheduling provisions remain intact and continue.

Superior benefits however are grand-parented, to mean all employees on staff as of March 31, 2006 will continue to be covered by their superior benefit provisions where those exist. In the near future, HSA intends to compile detailed resource packages for stewards regarding the list of superior benefits in place at each worksite.

New employees hired after March 31, 2006 will be covered by the terms and conditions outlined in the collective agreement. However, sectoral recruitment and retention difficulties coupled with what will surely be administratively burdensome separate accrual and accounting systems, just may inspire some employers to include any new hires under superior benefit provisions available to the majority of staff – an option contemplated under the collective agreement.

Casuals

Workers covered by Article 29 will now have the option of selecting percentage payments in lieu of vacation, or commence accrual of vacation credits for use in future. This option only becomes available when a temporary vacancy of six months duration or longer is posted and a casual is awarded the position. Casuals must advise their employer of their preference when the temporary position commences.

Vehicle allowance

Vehicle allowance increases in three stages to 50¢ / km by 2008.

Effective April 1, 2006, the vehicle allowance moves from 39¢ / km to 46¢ / km, to 48¢ / km on April 1, 2007, and to 50¢ / km on April 1, 2008.

Also effective April 1, 2006, the minimum vehicle allowance payable moves from \$2.00 to \$4.00.

Vehicle insurance liability moves from one (1) million dollars to two (2) million dollars, and if a car is a condition of employment, the employer must pay the premium difference between personal use and business use.

The employer is also to provide appropriate employment-related tax forms upon request.

Employment security and contracting out

The number of jobs that can be contracted out is limited to 700 FTEs.

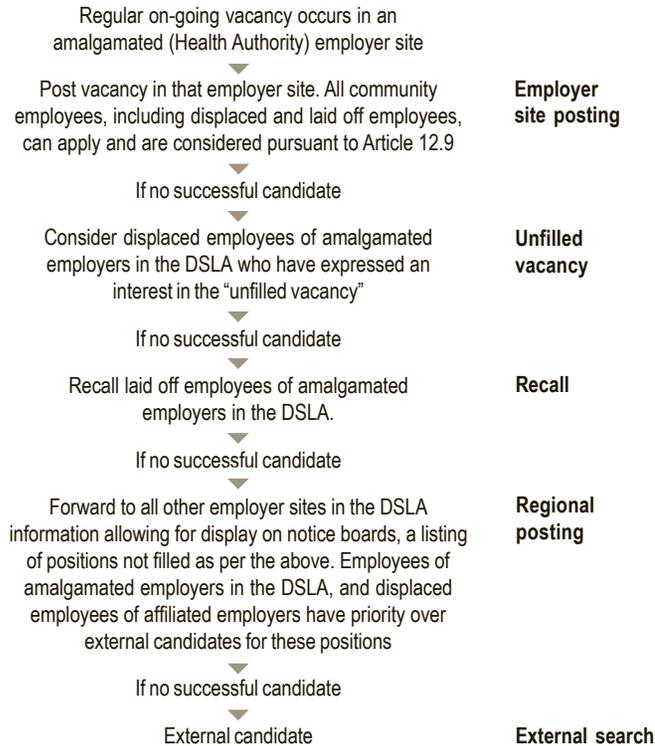
A newly negotiated feature is Severance Pay, which is to be payable in circumstances of job losses due to re-tendering of service contracts or contracting out of existing services. In such circumstances, severance allowance is calculated on the basis of one (1) weeks pay for every two (2) years of service to a maximum of ten (10) weeks of pay, prorated for part-time employees.

HSA members with severance entitlements expressed in superior benefits will retain their superior entitlements.

An additional severance provision (Enhanced Severance) is also part of Employment Security provisions and is anticipated to act as a disincentive to contracting out. In the event more than 700 FTEs are contracted out or lost due to contract re-tendering, laid off employees will be entitled to receive severance on the basis of one (1) week of pay for every one (1) year of service to a maximum of twenty (20) weeks of pay, prorated for part-time employees.

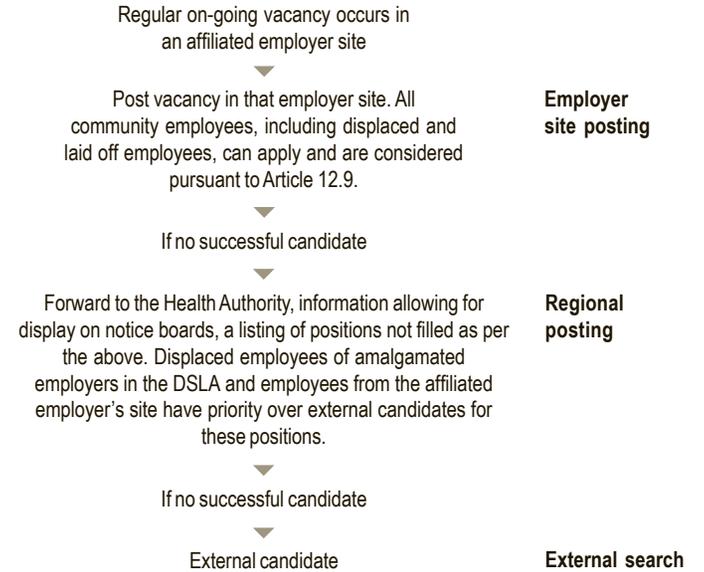
New regional posting provisions and enhanced employment opportunities will provide some options for employees – including those who work at affiliated agencies – should they be impacted by contracting out or service contract re-tendering. See attached flowcharts (next two pages) for ease of reference and explanation.

Group 1 - Amalgamated employer



* The posting process steps may occur simultaneously. The employer may implement electronic job posting and employee application for job posting in place of or in conjunction with paper posting.

Group 2: Affiliated employer



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Float positions

With input from the joint union/management committee, the employer may establish regular status float positions.

Occupational health and safety

Negotiated changes to Article 22 create stronger protections and a solid commitment from employers to “promote processes that provide the most effective ways to safely perform work” that includes risk assessments, environmental and ergonomic adjustments, care design/redesign for clients, sufficient staffing, and in-services/team meetings.

Occupational Health and Safety Agency for Healthcare (OHSAH)

A new Memorandum of Understanding regarding the prevention of work-related illnesses, injuries and disabilities sets out a renewed commitment by employers and government to work cooperatively with Unions to address work related illnesses, injuries and disabilities.

The Memorandum also commits the parties to work through the Occupational Health and Safety Agency to comprehensively develop solutions to make your work safer.

Maternity & parental leave

The tentative agreement incorporates language provisions for maternity and parental leave that resemble federal regulation. Employees are entitled to receive 17 weeks maternity leave and 35 weeks of parental leave in the case of the birth mother (for a total of 52 weeks leave), or 37 weeks of parental leave if the employee is not the birth mother.

Compassionate leave

Negotiated under a new title - Bereavement Leave - the existing special leave time off provisions for up to three days has been expanded in that leave under this article is available for employees to visit a terminally ill family member.

While employers refused to include in the collective agreement, they did acknowledge that employees can also access compassionate leave as per provincial legislation – up to eight weeks of unpaid leave to care for a terminally ill family member.

Long Term Disability - Early Intervention Program

A new initiative to offer proactive assistance for workers who may be off on sick leave for more than five days, or approaching an LTD claim. The new provision sets out basic principles agreed to guide the program from which will facilitate an earlier return to work for injured or sick employees in a “safe and timely manner” through individualized rehabilitation plans.

The specifics of this new Early Intervention Program will be designed by a joint union/employer committee with a targeted start date of October 1, 2006.

Pre-April 2000 LTD plan claimants

About 40 workers from this bargaining sector were impacted by the inferior LTD plan in place prior to April 2000. That LTD plan only provided a two-year claim and benefits period, and after that, disabled employees were cut off benefits and left to fend for themselves.

In past rounds of bargaining, the CBA has managed to secure additional monies to provide compensation assistance to LTD claimants caught in this unfortunate circumstance.

This tentative agreement holds a new Memorandum of Agreement that sees the government providing a special \$1.6 million dollar trust fund to ensure that these workers are provided with LTD benefits until they retire.



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Joint Benefits Review Committee

During negotiations the employer sought to reduce health and welfare benefit levels and introduce premium cost-sharing initiatives in their effort to find relief of rising premium costs. But rather than agreeing to open up existing health and welfare benefits, the CBA was able to negotiate a provision for a Joint Benefits Review Committee (JBRC) which is to be established by Fall 2006. The JBRC is to review current benefit plans and explore the feasibility of implementing options that might help to alleviate rising premium cost pressures.

The Committee will be comprised of equal representation from unions and employers. Changes to existing plans can only be implemented if there is mutual agreement between the Community Health Bargaining Association and HEABC.

Fiscal Dividend Fund

In the event the provincial government realizes a fiscal surplus of over \$150 million dollars for the audited statement 2009 to 2010, as per government policy there would be a one-time fiscal dividend payment to be distributed among all public sector employees based on a proportionate share basis.

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