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PLEASE POST – BL10191

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Agreement reached in Bill 29 talks *Highlights include a \$3 million fund for re-dress and education*

The HSA Board of Directors has approved a tentative Memorandum of Agreement with the provincial government and HEABC that includes a one-time payout of \$3-million that will compensate members financially harmed by Bill 29 and establish an educational fund for health science professionals covered by the Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association contract.

HSPBA negotiators have been meeting with HEABC and the provincial government since late last fall after the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in June that certain sections of Bill 29 are in contravention of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. In striking down parts of the legislation, the Court directed the government and affected unions to engage in negotiations and set a deadline of one year to reach an agreement. The provincial government set its own deadline of January 30 for a negotiated settlement.

Maureen Headley, chief negotiator for the HSPBA, noted that from day one, the provincial government made contracting out language their number one priority, promising to impose the language through legislation this spring if a negotiated agreement could not be reached.

With the threat of legislation, negotiators for the bargaining association focused their efforts on compensation for members directly affected by Bill 29, improved opportunities for professional development and an increased role for health science professionals in health care policy and planning.

“This agreement not only compensates those health science professionals who were negatively affected by Bill 29, but also recognizes the important role that all health science professionals play in our health care system,” Headley said.





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In addition to the \$3 million payout, the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) includes:

- A new process for consultation between the HSPBA, health authorities and the Ministry of Health on matters related to health human resources planning and other strategic initiatives;
- An expedited arbitration process for classification grievances;
- A correction to the “promotional glitch” for temporary employees.

The settlement agreement can be seen on the HSA website at www.hsabc.org.

HSA President Reid Johnson said the consultation process is an important gain for the HSPBA.

“HSA’s campaign on health science professional shortages has paid off with recognition from the highest levels of government that health science professionals are key partners in the health care team, and that there are particular recruitment and retention issues that must be addressed now to sustain the system in the future,” he said.

Johnson said the union will hold a one-day briefing session for all chief stewards to provide more details on the MOA. A date for the briefing will be scheduled shortly.

In addition to the HSPBA conclusion of negotiations, the Nurses Bargaining Association (NBA), Community Bargaining Association (CBA), and Facilities Bargaining Association (FBA) also reached agreements. The principles of compensation and job security for members affected by contracting out were key in all four sets of talks.

Highlights of settlements achieved in negotiations in other bargaining associations with HSA members include:

Community Bargaining Association:

- \$4-million pay-out to assist members affected by contracting out, including a \$2.5-million training fund
- See the tentative agreement at www.hsabc.org





Health
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Nurses' Bargaining Association:

- \$2-million payment, with \$200,000 to redress employees financially harmed by Bill 29, and the remaining \$1.8 million for upgrading and training.
- See the tentative agreement at www.hsabc.org

The Health Sciences Association of BC is the lead union in the HSPBA, which includes 15,000 health science professionals who are members of HSA, Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), BC Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU), Hospital Employees' Union (HEU) and Professional Employees' Association (PEA).

