



NEWS RELEASE

Mediator involved in health science professionals contract bargaining

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Negotiators for health science professionals and health employers have agreed to mediation nine months after bargaining began. Mediator Vince Ready was brought in by the parties this week.

“We are pleased to have Mr. Ready join us in trying to kick-start meaningful negotiations,” said Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association (HSPBA) Chief Negotiator Jeanne Meyers.

“And we’ve already seen the benefit of his inclusion in the talks. For the first time in nine months, government has tabled its position at the bargaining table. It’s the the first proposal we’ve seen from government, and it’s clear we have a very long way to go if we are to achieve a fair and reasonable agreement that reflects the value specialized health science professionals bring to the modern health care team,” Meyers said.

HSA President Reid Johnson said strike action will proceed this week. Starting tomorrow at 9 a.m. hospital pharmacists will reduce work to essential services only. Thursday at midnight, the rotating strike action will move to all medical and diagnostic imaging, with staff performing only essential services. Public health inspectors will also reduce services.

“We have been at the bargaining table for nine months. Our members are frustrated that government has clearly not taken an interest in these talks. Even after members voted 90 per cent in favour of a strike, government and HEABC failed to show up for scheduled bargaining. And not until this week, with strike action announced, did they come to the table with any kind of a position,” Johnson said.

“Pharmacists will kick off the job action tomorrow. They are particularly frustrated by government’s failure to negotiate – since they are the specialized health science professionals government targeted for a wage roll back of 9 to 14 per cent just before the contract expired in March. While government backed off of the rollback at the start of bargaining, pharmacists want their wages protected and, in fact improved, to keep them at comparable rates to their colleagues across the country – as well as in the retail sector,” Johnson said.

Health science professionals are the 17,000 members of the modern health care team who provide specialized clinical, diagnostic, and rehabilitation services in hospitals and communities around B.C. The Health Sciences Association of BC represents a majority of members covered by the contract. Other unions in the association are BC Government and Service Employees Union, Canadian Union of Public Employees, Professional Employees’ Association, and Hospital Employees’ Union.

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