



# Background

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## Health Facilities Subsector

- About **38,000 health care workers** providing front-line support services in BC's hospitals, long-term care facilities and diagnostic and treatment centres are represented in health facilities subsector bargaining.
- The health facilities subsector is the **largest single group of public employees** covered by a single contract, expiring March 31, 2006; and the second largest in the public sector, after BC's teachers, whose contract expires later this year.
- Health services and support staff work at more than **300 health care facilities** throughout the province. They provide a broad range of direct care and support services within **five distinct occupational groups** that include more than 270 job classifications.
  - > **Patient Care** workers include licensed practical nurses, care aides, clinical assistants, rehabilitation aides, physio and occupational therapy assistants, activity and rehabilitation aides, child and youth counsellors, patient porters and others.
  - > **Clerical** workers include nursing unit assistants, medical records technicians, laboratory clerks, medical transcriptionists, admitting clerks, staffing coordinators, accountants, OR booking clerks, payroll and personnel workers, receptionists and others.
  - > **Patient Care Technical** workers include renal dialysis technicians, lab assistants, cardiology technologists, sterile supply technicians, pathology attendants, pharmacy technicians, ophthalmic technicians, perfusionists, OR technicians, anaesthetic and respiratory aides, pacemaker technologists and others.
  - > **Support Services** workers include dietary aides and food service workers, cleaners and housekeepers, inventory clerks, laundry workers, transportation attendants, stores attendants, security officers, logistics supervisors and others.
  - > **Trades and Maintenance** workers include cooks, electricians, plumbers, power engineers, maintenance workers, air conditioning mechanics, carpenters, welders, boiler operators, gas fitters, welders, laundry mechanics and others.
- **Ten unions** are included in the facilities subsector union bargaining association. The largest is the Hospital Employees' Union representing 35,000 health care workers. The BC Government and Service Employees' Union represents 1,300 workers and the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 882 represents 940 workers.
- **Other unions** in the facilities subsector bargaining association are: the Construction and Specialized Workers' Union Local 1611; the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 230; the United Steelworkers of America Local 9705; the BC Nurses' Union; the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America Local No. 1598, the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry of the United States and Canada Local 324; and the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades Local No. 138.

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- **HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy** is the union bargaining association's chief spokesperson.
- The last freely negotiated settlement was in 2001.
- In 2002, the provincial government broke that contract when it passed **Bill 29** - the Health and Social Services Delivery Improvement Act - which voided key successorship and seniority provisions and attempted to restrict issues that could be raised at the bargaining table. Subsequently, thousands of health care workers lost their jobs to privatization and contracting out.
- In February, 2006 health care unions will be challenging the constitutionality of Bill 29 in the **Supreme Court of Canada**.
- In 2004, the provincial government imposed **Bill 37** - The Health Sector (Facilities Subsector) Collective Agreement Act - which rolled back workers' wages by 15 per cent.
- **Health employers** are represented by the Health Employers Association of BC.

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