



Bargaining Bulletin

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

THE HEART OF HEALTH CARE

Negotiators set positive tone as facility bargaining begins

Unions representing 38,000 hospital and long-term care workers marked day one of what will likely be marathon talks with a call to restore trust and confidence in the collective bargaining process.

In her opening statement on behalf of the ten-union bargaining association, HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy told health employers that the current round of bargaining was an opportunity to repair damaged relationships.

"It's about finding solutions that provide a more stable and secure foundation for health care through a negotiated contract in 2006," says Darcy, "a contract that's fair - a contract that takes us forward, not backwards."

The unions laid out their general objectives including: recovering ground lost as a result of Bill 37 wage cuts; the need to adjust compensation in the face of uncompetitive wage rates and increased responsibilities and training; fixing workload overload; and improving job security.

The employers - represented at the table by the Health Employers' Association of BC - agreed to share information relevant to bar-

gaining proposals and committed themselves to a problem-solving approach.

"It's early days," says Darcy. "But I believe we set a constructive tone for our negotiations that will serve us well as we go on to tackle more difficult issues.

"HEABC is raising the issue of rising benefit costs as they did at the community health table earlier this week. And we have been very clear that we want a no-concessions agreement.

"But employers also acknowledge that retention and recruitment problems, and issues around hard-to-fill shifts, must be addressed."

Talks continue on Tuesday when both sides have agreed to roll up their sleeves and get to work on concrete proposals that address the diverse skills and changing roles of health care workers.

Bargaining dates have been set for three days next week and both sides have agreed that they will continue on an ongoing basis.

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HOTLINE - 24-HOUR BARGAINING INFORMATION

sign up for e-mail @ www.heu.org

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The BC Health Services Division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees

