



# Bargaining Bulletin

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

THE HEART OF HEALTH CARE

## Failure to address devolved employees' concerns overshadows health and safety gains

**T**he Health Employers Association of BC tabled demands Friday which target more than 2,000 devolved community health employees – perpetually freezing them at current wage levels – overshadowed significant progress achieved on health and safety issues in community health negotiations last week.

The devolved workers – formerly employees of the provincial government (BCGEU and PEA members) and municipalities (HEU and CUPE members) – were transferred to health authorities several years ago. Initially, wage-protected status was negotiated for them and their pay frozen and career mobility opportunities limited.

The multi-union community health bargaining association wants to ensure that these devolved staff could bid on lateral transfers and maintain current wage rates – and not face a \$3-an-hour pay cut. In addition, the unions want wage-protected staff to receive:

- the appropriate wage increase when they are promoted to a higher position;
- reinstatement of the 4.21-per-cent wage rollback from 2004; and
- all new general wage increases and bonuses.

Also on Friday, HEABC tried to chisel away at

superior benefit provisions. Together, these two employer moves took some of the lustre off an important agreement reached in talks Thursday that will help reduce injury rates for workers in community health.

The resolution includes some strong language protection and a commitment from employers that the two sides will “promote processes that provide the most effective ways to safely perform work,” including risk assessments, environmental and ergonomic adjustments, care design/redesign for clients, sufficient staffing, and in-services/team meetings.

In addition, local OH&S committees will have jurisdiction to make specific recommendations using resources available from the Occupational Health and Safety Agency for Healthcare and the WCB.

BC health care workers are among the most frequently hurt at work and a community health worker is three times more likely to be injured than her counterpart in a health care facility.

HEU community health bargaining committee spokesperson Chris Dorais said that last week’s agreement includes the key elements needed to make workplaces safer.

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