



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

# NEWSLETTER

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## Update on the clerical benchmark review

*Process goes to arbitration after talks with HEABC reach an impasse*

The clerical benchmark review will move into arbitration after the year-long discussions between health unions and the Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC) broke down at the eleventh hour over how funding is to be used.

Late in the review process, health employers demanded that the \$1 million allocated for the 2007/2008 fiscal year not only cover wage adjustments but also pay for the employers' cost of benefits. That would reduce the amount available for wages by up to 25 per cent.

Health unions have always understood that funding would cover wage adjustments only – as has been the case in any previous general wage or classification settlement.

In order to resolve this impasse, the issue will be taken before an arbitrator.

“Health union representatives have worked very hard over the last 12 months to reach agreement with HEABC on a number of changes to benchmark language,” says acting secretary-business manager Zorica Bosancic. “This last-minute impasse – in what has already proven to be a long and difficult series of talks – further delays justice for our members.”

In the 2006 round of bargaining, HEU succeeded in negotiating \$3 million in cumulative funding to review clerical benchmarks and fund resulting wage adjustments. The monies will be allocated over three years, from April 2007 onwards, to all new or revised benchmarks, which are limited to the benchmark review set out in the letter of intent.

Since July 2006, a review committee – made up of three HEU members, one HEU staff resource person, one BCGEU representative and employer representatives – has been examining all 84 clerical benchmarks in the job family's 11 sub-categories.

The HEU committee members are Carol Kenzie from the Kelowna local, Barb Burke from the Penticton local and Shelley Adams-Turner from the Surrey local.

More than 1,300 HEU clerical workers completed an online survey in December 2006. The survey results have been used by the union's clerical benchmark review committee during negotiations with health employers.

August 28, 2007

