

Facilities Bargaining Association

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Hospital, long-term care and emergency health services workers vote 96 per cent in favour of strike action

[Burnaby-November 3, 2012] Health care workers have delivered a strong strike mandate to back their representatives in collective bargaining with B.C.'s health employers.

Members of the 11-union Facilities Bargaining Association voted 96 per cent in favour of strike action during two weeks of balloting which wrapped up late Friday.

FBA spokesperson Bonnie Pearson says the vote sends a crystal clear message to health employers and government.

“Health care workers have overwhelmingly rejected employer demands that they take on more costs as a pre-condition for even a minimal wage increase,” says Pearson who is also secretary-business manager of the Hospital Employees’ Union.

“It’s clear that government and public sector employers can settle agreements in some sectors within government’s overall negotiating mandate,” says Pearson. “I’ll be urging health employers to return to the table with a more flexible approach to our talks.”

The Facilities collective agreement covers about 46,000 health care workers who work in publicly funded hospitals, long-term care facilities, emergency health services, health authority corporate offices and warehouses, and in other settings.

HEU is the lead union in the Facilities Bargaining Association and represents 70 per cent of the workers covered by the agreement.

The balance are represented by the B.C. Government and Service Employees’ Union, the B.C. Nurses’ Union, the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 873, the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 882/882H and six other unions.

Negotiations began with the Health Employers Association of B.C. in February, 2012 and the current contract expired on March 31, 2012.

The diverse bargaining unit includes care aides, LPNs, ambulance paramedics, health records staff, laboratory and other diagnostic specialists, sterile supply technicians, emergency dispatch personnel, trades and maintenance workers, activity aides and rehab assistants, IT specialists, pharmacy technicians, admitting and booking clerks, administrative staff, cleaning and dietary staff, and many others.

