



Focus on safe work and wage increases as HEU prepares for Facilities bargaining

Delegates to HEU's Facilities Bargaining Conference say employers and government must invest in safer workplaces, more staff and higher wages.

The union is preparing for negotiations with the Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC) for the renewal of the Facilities collective agreement which expires March 31, 2022.

In a virtual conference held November 29 – December 1, about 150 delegates representing more than 41,000 HEU members in the facilities subsector elected 10 bargaining committee members who will join secretary-business manager Meena Brisard, president Barb Nederpel and financial secretary Betty Valenzuela at the bargaining table.

Brisard, the chief negotiator and spokesperson for the FBA, says delegates engaged in passionate debate about being recognized and properly compensated for their work, and the importance of reuniting all HEU members under the facilities collective agreement.

“Our members see the big picture – the long-term benefits to workers and public health care – of uniting for the common good, that’s where we find our greatest strength,” Brisard told delegates. “That’s how we build worker power in this sector.”

“The pandemic has highlighted the value of our members’ work and they need safer workplaces, more staff, and proper compensation for their critical role in delivering quality health care to British Columbians.”

Brisard also hosted a panel discussion with labour economist Jim Stanford and anti-privatization author and advocate Linda McQuaig which focused on the importance of public sector investments and innovations – and on how B.C. is in a good position to finance those investments in front-line services and workers.

Bargaining priorities adopted at the conference include: higher wages, improved overtime and special leave language, and a new training premium; better language on shift rotations, portability rights, and shop steward representation; and expanded EDMP funding.

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Delegates also adopted demands for a working from home policy, improved language around substance use disorders, and better incentives for retaining casuals.

About three out of four HEU members are in the facilities subsector, and they work in a wide range of care and support occupations in hospitals, care homes, administration services, and in the supply chain. HEU makes up more than 90 per cent of the members of the 10-union Facilities Bargaining Association.

Newly elected bargaining committee members: **Chena Binns** (care aide, Lions Gate), **Angela Bonazzo** (care aide, Prince George), **Rhonda Bruce** (rehabilitation assistant, South Okanagan), **Yann Cayla** (Millwright, Surrey), **Tina Clemente** (unit clerk, GF Strong), **Lisa Kreut** (inventory technician, Vancouver General), **Barbara Owen** (carpenter, Royal Columbian), **Diane Tomei** (pharmacy technician, Chilliwack Amalgamated), **Dallas Vandekerkhove** (programmer/systems analyst, Royal Jubilee) and **Jesse Winfrey** (cook, Cowichan Valley).

Alternates to the Facilities Bargaining Committee: Olivia Burgon, Michelle Jolley, Valerie Sailer, Barrie Watson, Heather Mandziuk, Alina Turner, Crystyna Sawyer, Maria Lugs, Cindy Crawford and Juliana Tomljenovic.

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