



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

# NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Contract talks begin today for 58,000 health care workers in B.C.

**[Burnaby, B.C.]** – Collective bargaining begins today between the nine-union Facilities Bargaining Association (FBA) and the Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC) for a new collective agreement covering 58,000 health care workers.

Negotiations are set against the backdrop of a two-year pandemic that's left health care workers exhausted, short-handed and struggling to make ends meet.

More than 90 per cent of FBA members are represented by the Hospital Employees' Union (HEU) and its secretary-business manager Meena Brisard is spokesperson for the FBA.

“Through this global health crisis, health care workers have found themselves in frightening circumstances, dealing with an unpredictable virus that has turned their workplaces upside down,” says Brisard.

“Through it all, they have shown incredible courage and commitment. But they are on the brink – exhausted and burnt out – and we should all be very concerned about what this means for the sustainability of our health care system beyond this pandemic.”

The unions will be negotiating for safer workplaces, significant improvements to the compensation package, and additional measures that support the retention and recruitment of skilled health care workers.

Last year, health care workers reported in an HEU poll that workloads, mental health, family relationships and their sense of personal safety have been negatively impacted by the pandemic – with nearly one in four saying they're more likely to quit health care within the next two years as a direct result of their experiences during COVID-19.

“We need bold measures to support health care workers now and attract the health care workforce of tomorrow,” says Brisard.

Health care workers covered by this agreement include nearly 300 job classifications in areas including patient care, health records, housekeeping and food services, labs and pharmacies, finance and administration, trades and maintenance, IT, and logistics and supply.

They work in hospitals and long-term care homes, clinics, supply warehouses, corporate offices and other settings. The current three-year agreement expires on March 31.

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According to the Ministry of Finance, there are 58,000 workers covered by the FBA collective agreement, making it the single largest table in the current round of bargaining in B.C.'s broad public sector.

In addition to HEU, the FBA includes the B.C. General Employees' Union; the International Union of Operating Engineers Local No. 882; the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local No. 230; the BC Nurses' Union; the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America Local No. 1598; the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry of the United States and Canada Local No. 324; the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades Local No. 138; and the Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada Local No. 5.

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