



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWS RELEASE

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Tentative agreement reached for more than 60,000 health care workers

[BURNABY, B.C.] – The nine-union Facilities Bargaining Association (FBA), representing more than 60,000 hospital and long-term care workers, reached a tentative agreement late last night with the Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC).

Hospital Employees' Union (HEU) secretary-business manager Meena Brisard, the FBA's lead negotiator, says the three-year agreement includes significant compensation improvements, and contains a number of measures to tackle serious staffing shortages and worker burnout.

"Protecting our members' earnings against rising costs has been a key priority for our bargaining committee," says Brisard. "This settlement provides for inflation-sensitive wage increases and other compensation improvements that will help keep skilled, experienced workers in health care, and attract new workers to careers in our hospitals and care homes.

"We've secured major new investments in training and education and a commitment to hire thousands of new workers. This will provide our members with career mobility, reduced workloads and more secure work which is key to addressing the staffing crisis we face today."

Other provisions give workers a greater voice on changes to shifts and rotations, providing more opportunities to improve work-life balance. And in a sector with some of the highest injury rates in the province, the agreement also includes more comprehensive health and safety protections.

Addressing cuts and privatization under the former government, the agreement provides for the return of more contracted out workers to public sector employment and sets out a process to address the impact of historic wage cuts.

There are also a number of agreed-to provisions that promote greater inclusion and equity in health care, including measures to strengthen our progress towards reconciliation and culturally safe health care delivery.

HEU represents more than 90 per cent of workers covered by the agreement. The HEU Provincial Executive will review the terms of the settlement after Labour Day. Full details of the agreement will be provided to union members in advance of voting on the agreement, dates of which have not yet been scheduled.

The tentative agreement was reached after 65 days of talks which began in February.

Workers covered by the agreement work in hundreds of skilled job classifications in hospitals, health clinics, care homes, corporate offices and supply warehouses. They work in direct patient and resident care as well as in support services, technical, clerical and trades areas.