



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWSLETTER

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HEU equity conference delegates united for change

About 100 delegates shared ideas, experiences and knowledge as they gathered together for HEU's 8th equity conference in Richmond from June 10-12.

Representing the union's five equity standing committees – First Nations, Pink Triangle, Women's, Ethnic Diversity and People with disAbilities – members actively engaged in brainstorming workshops to strategize on ways to raise awareness of equity-seeking health care workers' issues, promote deeper involvement in union activism and participation, and to make recommendations to HEU's Provincial Executive on how the union's structure can better reflect the membership's diversity and provide services to members.

Delegates were inspired and moved by several thought-provoking presentations covering issues important to HEU members. Themes included safe drinking water, universal child care, violence against women and girls, and workers' health and safety rights.

Guest speakers included human rights activist Shelagh Day on missing and murdered Aboriginal women; CUPE's Don Moran and Brian Barron on the "Enough is Enough" campaign to promote safe-drinking water on First Nations reserves; Canadian Working Group on HIV and Rehabilitation representative Glyn Townson on episodic disabilities; the Coalition of Childcare Advocates of B.C.'s Sharon Gregson on the \$10-a-day child care campaign; and Karl Flecker of the Canadian Labour Congress on temporary foreign workers.

During the three-day conference, delegates participated in lively round-table discussions and broke out into caucus sessions to address issues specific to their equity groups. Information gathered from that work will be reviewed as part of HEU's Responsive Union Project, stemming from Resolution 75 passed at 2012 convention.

"Resolution 75 directs the union to get to know our members better," said HEU's assistant secretary-business manager Jacquie de Aguayo. "It's an opportunity to make ourselves strong and united, but we need to understand ourselves first.

"By reviewing the occupational, sectoral and equity make up of our union, we can build and defend our union, and build on the diversity of our union... We need to make sure that members see themselves in the union, regardless of where they work, the work they do, or the equity group they identify with."

Each equity caucus also elected new standing committee members for the 2013-2015 term. Check the next issue of the *Guardian* for extensive equity coverage.

For more information on HEU's equity committees, visit <http://www.heu.org/members/human-rights>.

June 14, 2013

