



Health unions in facilities subsector bring solutions to the negotiating table

Talks for a renewed collective agreement will resume in the first week of January

Health unions in the Facilities Bargaining Association (FBA) and the Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC) began talks for a new collective agreement covering more than 40,000 health care workers in the province's hospitals and long-term care facilities on December 17 and 18.

Following opening remarks from both parties, the FBA introduced proposals, focusing on solutions that would improve health care services, not only in the short-term but over time as well.

The unions' presentation covered:

- employment security including expanded job opportunities and province-wide seniority;
- the need for increased compensation for groups like licensed practical nurses and nursing unit assistants;
- ensuring workers affected by consolidated services and the Health Authorities Shared Services Organization (HASSO) remain in the FBA;
- reduction of prescription drug costs while safeguarding basic entitlements;
- reduction of injury rates particularly in long-term care, and
- the continuation of policy tables.

Judy Darcy, secretary-business manager of the Hospital Employees' Union (HEU) and FBA spokesperson, says that the unions have come to the table with concrete solutions. "I am confident that with our opening presentation, we have laid a solid foundation upon which talks can build, despite some challenging circumstances.

"We hope that further discussions with health employers will enable us to work together to realize immediate, mid- and long-term solutions that will stabilize and enhance delivery of services to British Columbians, provide a better quality of work life for members, and contribute to the sustainability of public health care," says Darcy.

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Negotiations have recessed over the holiday season and will resume the first week in January 2010.

Updates on negotiations are also available by phoning HEU's bargaining hotline at 604-438-5000, extension 1515 or 1516 in Metro Vancouver, or toll-free across B.C. at 1-800-663-5813, extension 1515 or 1516.

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