



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

# NEWSLETTER

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## Settlement reached on facilities “page 209” benchmark series review

The Facilities Bargaining Association (FBA) – in which HEU is the lead negotiator – has reached an agreement with the Health Employers Association of British Columbia (HEABC) on the “page 209” benchmark series review.

The settlement includes revised benchmarks, including wage grids and an implementation agreement. The benchmark review stemmed from the 2006-2010 facilities subsector contract, which allocated a maximum of two million dollars to be spent on wage grids for revised benchmarks, with no more than one million dollars applied per year.

After a year of progress on benchmark language changes, talks broke down when HEABC insisted that employers’ cost of related benefits be taken from the two million dollar fund. That issue was settled in July during arbitration with labour mediator Vince Ready, which got talks between the parties back on track.

“We’re pleased that a significant number of our members affected by this benchmark review will receive wage increases,” says assistant secretary-business manager Bonnie Pearson. “Committee members from each job, as well as Provincial Executive representative Sandra Giesbrecht, were very concrete, articulate and persuasive in providing evidence and suggestions. We could not have made this progress without them.”

Pearson acknowledges that it’s been a very long process to reach a settlement. “These were lengthy negotiations,” notes Pearson, “but both parties persevered and worked hard, which resulted in a positive outcome.”

### **Benchmark revisions and rate adjustments**

As a result of the benchmark review, the language in many benchmarks was revised to reflect increased complexity, responsibilities and/or expanded scope. For some, there were revisions to the required education, training or experience. These benchmarks received wage grid increases (*see page three table*).

Some benchmark language changes were of a “housekeeping” nature – meaning that the revision did not change the scope of work in terms of complexity, level of responsibility or qualifications. Therefore, there’s no grid rate increase for those benchmarks – Ophthalmic Technician I, Stores Attendant II and III, and Perfusionist Assistant.

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Through the review process, it was determined that some benchmarks would remain the same as they generally reflect the current work performed. There were also instances where no one was matched to the benchmark. As a result, there were no revisions to the language or to existing wage grids for this group of benchmarks.

In addition, the parties agreed that there may be instances where an individual position or job may not be reflected in the benchmarks. As such, both sides retain their rights – outlined in the *Maintenance Agreement and Classification Manual of the Facilities Subsector Collective Agreement* – which includes the right to file job review requests (JRR).

### **Rehabilitation Assistants and Activity Workers III and IV**

The parties agreed to interim rate adjustments for the term of the 2006-2010 facilities contract for three benchmarks: Rehabilitation Assistant, Activity Worker III (now to be called Program Coordinator I), and Activity Worker IV (now to be called Program Coordinator II).

The duties, responsibilities and/or qualifications were revised for these benchmarks. However, the funds allocated were insufficient for the parties to reach agreement on the appropriate wage grid. The FBA will refer these three benchmarks to the classification referee to determine the final grid rate placement. Any grid rate change that comes out of this process will be effective on the award date or April 1, 2010, **whichever is later**.

### **Retroactive date**

Based on the funds available and the number of members covered by this review, the parties agreed that the effective date for all revised benchmarks will be April 1, 2008. This means that **wage grid increases will be retroactive to April 1, 2008**.

Although the allocation of one million dollars per year sounds significant, wage rate changes add up quickly when the total number of full-time equivalents (FTEs) is put into the picture. For example, a one grid increase of approximately 34 cents/hour for 140 FTEs across the province costs about \$92,820.

### **Implementation agreement**

The implementation agreement contains language to protect members where the benchmark qualifications have changed. It's expected that positions and members currently matched to a benchmark will continue to be matched to the revised benchmark.

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The settlement also states that the FBA retains the right – under the *Maintenance Agreement* – to take outstanding or new JRRs forward. There are, however, some outstanding JRRs that may be resolved as a result of this benchmark review.

**Benchmarks reviewed**

The following benchmarks were reviewed in the “page 209” process: Coordinator of Volunteers I and II, Accounting Supervisor, Accountant I and II, Medical Records Technician, Activity Worker III (now to be called Program Coordinator I), Activity Worker IV (now to be called Program Coordinator II), Nursing Assistant II (Rehabilitation Assistant), Social Service Assistant I and II, ECG Assistant, Cardiac Ultrasound Technician, EEG Assistant, Orthopaedic Technologist, Ophthalmic Technician I, II and III, Pathology Attendant I and III, Pathology Attendant II (Tissue Bank, Supervisor), Perfusionist Assistant, Physiological Laboratory Tech I and II, Renal Dialysis Technician I, II and III, Stores Attendant I, II, III, IV and V, Stores Attendant III (Receiver) and Stores Attendant IV (Receiver).

**New grids and pay rates**

<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Current grid level</b>	<b>Current 2009 pay rate per hour</b>	<b>New grid level</b>	<b>New 2009 pay rate per hour</b>
Coordinator of Volunteers I	18	20.55	23	22.28
Coordinator of Volunteers II	22	21.94	27	23.65
Accounting Supervisor	31	25.03	34	26.06
Accountant I	31	25.03	34	26.06
Accountant II	36	26.75	39	27.77
Program Coordinator I (formerly Activity Worker III)	25	22.96	26 interim	23.32
Program Coordinator II (formerly Activity Worker IV)	28	24.00	30 interim	24.68
Rehabilitation Assistant	18	20.55	22 interim	21.94
Social Service Assistant I	21	21.59	22	21.94
ECG Assistant	13	18.82	15	19.52
Orthopaedic Technologist	SA23	23.64	30	24.68
Ophthalmic Technician II	26	23.32	29	24.34
Ophthalmic Technician III	29	24.34	33	25.73
Pathology Attendant I	23	22.28	26	23.32
Pathology Attendant II (Tissue Bank)	29	24.34	31	25.03
Pathology Attendant II (Supervisor)	29	24.34	31	25.03
Pathology Attendant III	33	25.73	35	26.41
Stores Attendant IV (Receiver)	14	19.18	15	19.52
Stores Attendant IV	14	19.18	15	19.52
Stores Attendant V	17	20.22	19	20.90

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**Publication of benchmarks**

The parties must publish the revised benchmarks by December 1, 2009, and employers are required to pay the new rates to affected members as soon as possible, **but no later than three pay periods after the publishing date**. Retroactive payments – back to April 1, 2008 – must be made **within six (6) pay periods**.

Once the benchmarks are finalized, they will be published, sent to each local, and posted on HEU's website by December 1, 2009.

Watch for updates on the union's website <[www.heu.org](http://www.heu.org)>.

For more information, contact your local servicing representative.

*October 27, 2009*