

Facilities Bargaining Association BULLETIN



JANUARY 21, 2010

PLEASE POST

Unions look to protect jobs and services at the bargaining table

Job security provisions must be kept in place to deal with the massive reorganization of health services planned by government

In the face of plans for the massive reorganization of health care services and the threat of further cuts to health care in the March provincial budget, health care unions say it's critical to preserve job security protections in the current round of collective bargaining.

The multi-union Facilities Bargaining Association resumes negotiations today with B.C.'s health employers for a renewed contract covering more than 40,000 hospital and long-term care workers.

FBA spokesperson Judy Darcy says that protecting decent jobs and the public's investment in a skilled and experienced workforce is an urgent priority at the bargaining table given the health authorities' plans for yet another round of destabilizing cuts, privatization and reorganization.

"Our members are doing their part to deliver quality care to British Columbians under increasingly difficult conditions," says Darcy, who is also the secretary-business manager of the Hospital Employees' Union. "They deserve to know that their contributions are recognized and valued."

The FBA bargaining team is pushing for expanded rights for members affected by the planned consolidation of services between health authorities and by the creation of a new provincial entity – the Health Authority Shared Services Organization – where other services will be transferred.

"These changes will be extremely disruptive and are planned to take place in a very short time frame," says Darcy. "And without provisions in the agreement that protect our members' rights, these transitions will also be very difficult to implement. We've been working hard on this issue over the last few days."

The FBA says that current contract provisions that place a cap on the number of layoffs due to privatization needs to be maintained and expanded.

"A new round of cuts and privatization will affect everyone from the nursing team to clerical workers to support staff to the lab and pharmacy," says Darcy. "Our proposals will minimize the impact of these actions on health services and on the front-line workers who deliver them."

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In addition to job security, improved compensation for groups like LPNs and nursing unit assistants (unit clerks) and the safeguarding of extended health benefits, are the FBA's key bargaining objectives.

The current collective agreement expires on March 31, 2010.

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

NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE*
FACILITIES BARGAINING ASSOCIATION

*The FBA negotiating committee consists of representatives of:

Hospital Employees' Union
BC Government and Service Employees' Union
International Union Operating Engineers Local 882
Construction and Specialized Workers Union Local 1611
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers