



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

BARGAINING BULLETIN

PLEASE POST

Tentative agreement provides stability and protects wages and benefits for 48,000 B.C. health care workers

A tentative agreement covering more than 48,000 hospital and long-term care workers has been reached between the multi-union Facilities Bargaining Association (FBA) and B.C.'s health employers.

The two-year agreement protects wages and extended health benefits, expands options for workers affected by restructuring and privatization, and provides compensation increases for targeted job categories.

The FBA bargaining committee and the Provincial Executive of the Hospital Employees' Union – representing more than 90 per cent of the workers in the sector – are also recommending ratification.

The agreement was reached against the backdrop of a government freeze on public-sector compensation and just weeks before the tabling of a post-Olympic budget that is expected to result in a new round of health authority budget cuts.

Under the government's negotiating mandate, any improvements in the contract that have cost implications had to be paid for by making adjustments elsewhere in the agreement.

FBA spokesperson Judy Darcy says that despite the challenges, the unions negotiated an agreement that provides members with the stability they need to weather the next two years of health authority cuts and restructuring.

"We were crystal clear that tough times are no excuse for inaction," says Darcy, the secretary-business manager for the Hospital Employees' Union.

"By making creative and reasonable choices, we were able to make progress on our members' key bargaining priorities. We did this while protecting wages and ensuring that extended health plan benefits – which are so critical to our members and their families – remained intact and sustainable."

Key tentative agreement highlights

Here is a summary of the major highlights of the agreement. A comprehensive report that includes full details is being prepared for members.

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The tentative agreement runs from April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2012.

Job security and expanded employment options

- Employees transferred to the provincial Health Authority Shared Services Organization (SSO) will not be moved into the community health subsector and will continue to be covered by the facilities agreement.
- All employees will have access to a health authority-wide seniority list.
- A number of measures have been negotiated to assist members affected by the consolidation of services (such as Lower Mainland consolidation) or the transfer of services to the new SSO including:
 - No interruption of pay or benefits.
 - Port service and related banks (like sick leave and vacation).
 - Port seniority to new employer while maintaining seniority with previous employer for up to five years.
 - Right to go on casual list with former employer and accumulate seniority for time worked.
- For the first time, enhanced severance of up to \$17,000 for employees laid off as a result of contracting out is included in the collective agreement.
- Enhanced severance can be accessed by employees who retire or resign under a Voluntary Departure program designed to free up positions and avoid layoffs due to privatization.
- A re-training fund of up to \$2.5 million has been established for workers affected by privatization.
- Casuals impacted by privatization can now register on a casual list in another department and can port seniority if re-employed by another health-sector employer within six months.

Targeted compensation increases

Targeted compensation increases have been negotiated for LPNs, orthopaedic technologists, lab assistants, nursing unit assistants (unit clerks), accountants, buyers and sterile supply technicians.

- A six-step increment system for LPN and orthopaedic technologist pay will be phased in over the two-year agreement, with three increments implemented in the first year and a further three increments in the second year.
- Over the term of the agreement, LPNs and orthopaedic technologists will see wage increases of up to seven per cent, depending on years of service.

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- In order to establish the increment grid, a starting step for new hires who are newly licensed LPNs (less than one year) will be set at three per cent below the current wage. But no current employee will have their wage rolled back as a result of this new step.
- Lab assistants, nursing unit assistants (unit clerks), accountants, buyers and sterile supply technicians will receive a 1.5 per cent wage hike in the first year.

Wages and extended health benefits protected for all members

- The vision care benefit increases by \$125 – from \$225 to \$350 every 24 months for employees and dependents.
- The one-time annual deductible, which has been at \$25 since 1968, rises to \$100.
- A \$9 limit on dispensing fees for prescription drugs falls within the rates charged by most B.C. pharmacists.
- LTD claimants can return to their own job after being on benefits for up to 19 months (reduced from 24 months). **This change affects new claimants only.**
- Vacation entitlement will be adjusted for all employees over the term of the agreement. Even with the changes, the vacation entitlements in this agreement remain among the best in the country in the health care sector.
- This attached grid illustrates how the vacation entitlement adjustment would affect members with various years of service.

Year One:

- 1 year continuous service – 18 days
- 2 to 4 years service – 19 days
- 5 to 29 years service – no additional vacation day
- 30 or more years service – one day less
- casual workers – pay in lieu reduced from 12.2% to 11.8%

Year Two:

- 1 to 4 years service – 18 days
- 5 to 29 years service – no additional vacation day
- 30 or more years service – one day less
- casual workers – pay in lieu reduced to 11.4%

From July 1, 2012 onward:

- 1 to 4 years service – 18 days
- 5 to 29 years service – one additional vacation day
- 30 or more years service – 43 days
- casual workers – pay in lieu set at 11.4%

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- These adjustments **do not** affect Supplementary Vacation entitlements.
- The change in vacation would commence with the July 1, 2010 accrual year. This provision would **not** affect vacation accrual from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010.
- Any savings from changes to vacation entitlement after July 1, 2012 will be applied to improve the terms and conditions of the collective agreement.

Other improvements

- A joint committee on safe patient/resident handling techniques will be established to develop strategies and make recommendations on ways to reduce injury rates.
- Typing/keyboarding test results will stand for 24 months and members will not be required to retest when applying for positions that require the same or lesser standard.
- The provisions on Responsive Shift Scheduling that previously applied only to LPNs and care aides are now extended to include all members.
- The highly successful, union-administered FBA Education Fund will receive \$1.25 million in continuing funding and, for the first time, casual employees will be eligible for education funding under the program.
- A Joint Engagement Committee including senior representatives from unions, government and health authorities will build on the work of the nursing team policy committees. The JEC will work to optimize utilization of LPNs, care aides and unit clerks as well as engage non-clinical teams such as trades and maintenance workers.
- Please check the HEU website at www.heu.org over the next few days for fact sheets on various aspects of the agreement, and for details on upcoming meetings and ratification votes.

February 8, 2010

2010-2012 Vacation Entitlement Chart under Facilities Tentative Agreement

Years of Service	Vacation Entitlement current	Vacation Entitlement Tentative Agreement Year 1	Vacation Entitlement Tentative Agreement Year 2 and onward
1	20 days	18 days	18 days
2	20	19	18
3	20	19	18
4	20	19	18
5	21	20	19
6	22	21	20
7	23	22	21
8	24	23	22
9	25	24	23
10	26	25	24
11	27	26	25
12	28	27	26
13	29	28	27
14	30	29	28
15	31	30	29
16	32	31	30
17	33	32	31
18	34	33	32
19	35	34	33
20	36	35	34
21	37	36	35
22	38	37	36
23	39	38	37
24	40	39	38
25	41	40	39
26	42	41	40
27	43	42	41
28	44	43	42
29	45	44	43
30	45	44	43
31	45	44	43
32	45	44	43
33	45	44	43
34	45	44	43
35	45	44	43
36	45	44	43
37	45	44	43
38	45	44	43
39	45	44	43
40	45	44	43
41	45	44	43
42	45	44	43
43	45	44	43
44	45	44	43
45	45	44	43

The shaded areas represent examples of vacation entitlement for regular employees under the tentative agreement.

Most employees do not accumulate additional vacation during the term of the agreement.

Some employees will see a reduction in vacation entitlement of one to two days during the term of the agreement.

From July 1, 2012 onward, employees with five to 29 years of service resume vacation accumulation at the rate of one day per year as illustrated in the final column.

Supplementary vacation is not affected.

**The change in vacation would commence with the July 1, 2010 accrual year. This provision would not affect vacation accrual from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010.