



Tentative agreement safeguards benefits, adjusts long-term disability plan, with no changes to sick time

IN RECENT YEARS HEALTH EMPLOYERS have pushed hard to reduce health care extended benefits. Knowing this, HEU members at the union's occupational and wage policy conference made safeguarding members' extended health care benefits plan a top priority for this round of bargaining.

- The extended health benefit plan remains intact and is updated to make it more sustainable for the future.
- The vision care benefit for members and dependents has been increased by \$125 – from \$225 every 24 months to \$350 per person every 24 months.
- The one-time annual deductible, which has remained the same for more than 40 years, increased from \$25 to \$100.
- The prescription drug dispensing fee is capped at \$9, which falls within the rate charged by most B.C. pharmacists.
- A Benefits Joint Working Group will study ways to improve the quality of benefits, while reducing growth in costs.
- Sick banks, sick bank accumulation and sick bank payout do not change.
- The “own occupation” period in the LTD plan is reduced from 24 months to 19 months.
- This change does not affect current LTD recipients, or those who are currently in a waiting period.
- An enhanced Disability Management Joint Working Group will develop a comprehensive approach to delivering services to affected members focussing on intervention and prevention with rehabilitation centered on training inside and then outside the health care sector.
- Any cost savings will go to prevention initiatives, disability management and health care services in general.

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New seniority provisions

Portability of seniority

Portability of seniority is substantially improved.

- A worker who resigns voluntarily and is re-employed within six months by the same or another employer covered by the agreement, is entitled to port all their seniority and related benefits. This also applies to casuals. Before, a worker would lose all seniority.

Consolidation of seniority

New dovetailed seniority lists will be created and implemented by the first pay period of January 2011 for each health authority and for the Health Authority Shared Services Organization.

- Each employee ends up with one status – regular full-time, regular part-time or casual.
- Vacancies posted at all work locations covered by a dovetailed seniority list and all workers entitled to apply at the same time for vacancies.

Benefits and consolidation of seniority

- Workers keep all related benefits entitlements but those can't exceed what would accrue for a full-time equivalent (FTE) per year.
- Benefit coverage to a worker will be provided under one health plan.
- Workers with multiple regular positions receive aggregate total of banks but not more than the maximum allowed, except for vacation in some cases.
- Workers with multiple regular positions with more than a full-time vacation credit will be paid out or scheduled to take paid vacation for the additional time on a one-time-only basis.

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Consolidation of services and the SSO

MEMBERS AFFECTED BY THE Lower Mainland Consolidation (Lower Mainland Integration) and similar consolidations in the future, as well as the Health Authority Shared Services Organization (SSO), will find new provisions that strengthen job security and expand opportunities including:

- HEU members transferred to the Shared Services Organization will remain in the facilities subsector and the SSO will become an employer in the facilities subsector.
- Unions and employers will meet to work out union representation issues where there are multiple worksites and /or multiple employers.
- Under the transfer agreement, expanded protections include:
 - No interruption of pay or benefits
 - Port service and related benefits, 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, accumulate seniority for time worked
 - Casuals can access casual list with the new employer

Under these provisions, notice of a transfer of services must be given to the union at least 90 days prior to the transfer. During that period, employers will consult with the union on the impact of the changes on members, proposals to manage the impact of the transfer and other labour adjustment measures.

Expansion of seniority

New dovetailed seniority lists will be created December 31, 2010, and implemented by the first pay period of January 2011 for all health authorities and the Shared Services Organization. Portability of seniority has been expanded.

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Job security and expanded opportunities for members affected by privatization

MEMBERS WHOSE JOBS CONTINUE to be threatened by contracting out or public-private partnerships (P3s) have improved employment security protections if laid off.

- Enhanced severance
 - Bill 29 Settlement Agreement now in the collective agreement
 - A worker may be able to voluntarily sever employment as a result of an employer canvass and be entitled to enhanced severance
- Posting or bumping into a position
- Applying for a job vacancy across any health authority or the SSO
- Registering for work as a casual
- Retraining through \$2.5 million in funds from health authorities
 - Employer no longer determines options for training
 - Programs no longer restricted to health care
 - Workers no longer have to remain in health care upon completion of retraining

Expansion of seniority

New dovetailed seniority lists will be created and implemented by December 31, 2010 for all health authorities (one already exists in the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority) and the Shared Services Organization. Portability of seniority has been expanded.

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Expanded rights and access for casuals

- Casual employees who are laid off as a result of contracting out or the establishment of a P3, can now register for work in another department with their current employer, or port their seniority to a new health sector employer if they are re-employed within 180 days of termination.
- Under this agreement casual employees will now be able to access training opportunities through the FBA Education Fund, which was initially established for regular employees in 2006 bargaining.
- This agreement contains changes to vacation provisions that impact | regular and casual employees. In the first year of the contract, casuals will receive 11.8 per cent of their straight time pay in lieu of scheduled vacation and statutory holidays. In the second year, they will receive 11.4 per cent.
- Like all regular employees, casuals who voluntarily leave their jobs with an FBA employer and are subsequently re-hired by the same employer or hired by another Facilities employer within 180 days can now port their seniority.

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Wages and special adjustments

SPECIAL MARKET ADJUSTMENTS have been negotiated for occupations where educational requirements and responsibilities have increased, and where there is a recruitment and retention issue, that is, where wages are out-of-sync with other jurisdictions and the private sector.

Securing these special adjustments was a priority set out by more than 600 representatives of HEU Locals in wage policy and occupation conferences last year.

- Licensed Practical Nurses (including OR LPNs and LPN Supervisors) and Orthopaedic Technologists will now be paid on a wage grid that contains three increments in the first year and six increment steps in the second.
- Under the new grid, most LPNs will see their wages increased by three to seven per cent.
- The first step of the grid will start at three per cent below the current rate for LPNs with less than one year's service, but this category **will not apply** to any current LPNs.
- The top rate in year two of the contract applies to LPNs with eight or more years of service.
- Casual LPNs will be placed on the increment step indicated by their accumulated hours of service.

On April 1, 2010, a **1.5 per cent special wage adjustment** will be applied to the following classifications:

Laboratory Assistant I • Laboratory Assistant II and II(A) • Laboratory Assistant III • Laboratory Assistant IV • Sterile Supply Technician (Nursing Assistant I, II, III and IV) • Buyer • Buyer Supervisor • Accountant I and II • Accounting Supervisor • Nursing Unit Assistant (unit clerk)

Wages and extended health benefits for all other HEU members have been protected.

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More opportunities to advocate for members with top decision makers

A NEW JOINT ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE – with senior level representatives from the health unions, government and health authorities – will focus on system-wide improvements in areas such as health and safety, education, optimal utilization of diverse occupations and role definitions.

The Joint Engagement Committee will:

- Build on the joint policy committees on LPN/Care Aide utilization and residential care, meeting up to eight times a year.
- Focus on expanded utilization of LPNs, Care Aides and Unit Clerks and also examine ways to include non-clinical occupations, such as trades and maintenance, in discussions.
- Determine how to increase members' training and leadership opportunities through savings from increased cost efficiencies.

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS ESTABLISHED in the *Bill 29 Settlement Agreement* will now be contained directly in the facilities collective agreement. Under this process, the unions have an opportunity to propose alternatives to privatization and will receive advance notice of any plans to contract out work.

But the tentative agreement also includes expanded consultation with senior government and health authority decision-makers.

- The unions will meet each year with the Leadership Council (health authority CEOs and senior health ministry officials) to discuss developments and potential initiatives that may affect members in the future.
- The unions will also meet twice a year with leaders from each health authority to discuss developments and potential initiatives that may impact members in the future.

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Affiliate employers and the tentative agreement

SOME HEU MEMBERS WORK DIRECTLY for health authorities or for the Health Authorities Shared Services Organization (SSO).

Others members covered by the facilities agreement are employed in “affiliates” – facilities that are run by non-profit or for-profit operators.

Some of the language negotiated in the tentative agreement around seniority **does not** apply to affiliates while other provisions do.

- **Health authority-wide consolidation of seniority:** This applies to direct employees of health authorities/SSO only. **It does not apply to employees of affiliates.**
- **Employees of affiliates are not impacted by bumping** that may occur as a result of health authority-wide consolidation.
- **Job Security and Expanded Opportunities Addendum:** Most provisions in this addendum – which provides protection and opportunities for workers affected by privatization and transfer of services (through consolidation, or to the SSO) – apply to affiliate employees as well as to direct employees of health authorities/SSO.
 - Part 1 – Contracting Out – applies to affiliates
 - Part 2 – Leadership Consultation – while these meetings are with the Leadership Council, which includes health authority CEOs and not affiliate employers, some of the broader issues will impact affiliate employers
 - Part 2 – Consultation Process – Contracting Out – applies to affiliates
 - Part 3 – Employee Options – all options apply to affiliates
 - Part 4 – Contract Re-tendering – applies to affiliates
 - Part 5 – Transfer of Services – applies to affiliates

If you have a more specific question regarding the impact of the agreement on affiliate employees, please ask your servicing representative or local executive member, and be sure to attend your local ratification meeting.

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