

Facilities Bargaining Association BULLETIN



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Health care workers ratify two-year agreement

Hospital and long-term care workers have voted 77 per cent in favour of a new two-year collective agreement with B.C.'s health employers.

The agreement protects wages and extended health benefits. It also expands options for workers affected by restructuring and privatization through expanded seniority rights, improved severance provisions, and additional re-training funds

In addition, the agreement provides special wage adjustments for targeted job categories where educational requirements and responsibilities have increased, and where there are recruitment and retention issues.

The agreement covers 48,000 workers and was reached between the multi-union Facilities Bargaining Association and the Health Employers Association of BC on February 6. Ratification votes were held across the province over the past three weeks.

FBA spokesperson Judy Darcy says the agreement will provide members with concrete measures to ensure greater certainty and stability in a health care system that continues to be buffeted by cuts and restructuring.

"Patients and long-term care residents will also benefit because the provisions we've negotiated will help retain workers affected by contracting out and restructuring," adds Darcy, who is also secretary-business manager of the Hospital Employees' Union.

"Despite government's restrictive bargaining framework, we made progress on our members' key bargaining priorities," says Darcy. "And we did so while protecting wages and ensuring that extended health plan benefits remain intact and sustainable for members and their families."

The agreement covers about 270 different jobs in every area of health care including nursing, health records, information technology, logistics and supply, diagnostic testing, pharmacy, trades and maintenance, dietary, housekeeping, payroll, and more.

There are 11 member unions in the Facilities Bargaining Association, including the Hospital Employees' Union, which represents more than 90 per cent of the workers covered by the agreement.

The B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union and the International Union of Operating Engineers also represent a significant number of workers in the sector.

The new agreement expires March 31, 2012.

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