

2006 UPDATE on **Bargaining** #5

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Unions focus on rebuilding workforce

February 10, 2006

The UBA bargaining team has tabled proposals aimed at rebuilding the community social services workforce.

At the bargaining table for nearly 15,000 community social service workers across BC this week, the UBA proposed positive solutions to address the severe recruitment and retention crisis in the sector.

Community social service workers are underpaid and have had their benefits cut. Workload, burnout and workplace injuries have increased. The UBA proposes to rebuild and strengthen the workforce by giving workers stability, work/life balance, security and fairness.

"For the past two years our members have lived with the employers' and the government's failed experiment in community social services: drastic cuts to funding with workers and the people they support paying the costs," said UBA Chief Spokesperson Chris Mullen.

"Now it is time to listen to the frontline workers, including those on our bargaining committee, who have the

knowledge and experience to find long-term solutions to the sector's problems."

"We spent the week going through our proposals in detail with the employers' committee," said Mullen. Last week, the employers' initial response to almost every UBA proposal was a patent "not interested".

"We strongly hope the employers will give our proposals the respect they - and we - deserve," Mullen said. "The 13 unions in the UBA held workshops, conferences and conducted extensive consultation with members before developing the proposals.

Many of the proposals were long-term features of collective agreements in the sector before the employers started demanding concessions.

"We invite the employers to work with us," Mullen concluded.

Progress was limited to resolving four minor housekeeping issues this week. Bargaining continues next week.

For the latest information check our website at: www.respectbc.ca

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Canadian Union of Public Employees

Hospital Employees' Union

Health Sciences Association of British Columbia

United Food and Commercial Workers International Union

International Union of Operating Engineers

Construction and Specialized Workers' Union

United Steelworkers of America

National Automobile, Aerospace, Transportation and General Workers Union of Canada (CAW-Canada)

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