Facilities talks to resume in September

Talks for a new Facilities collective agreement covering 46,000 health care workers will resume in September.

The multi-union Facilities Bargaining Association has now tabled its entire package including proposals for fair and reasonable wage increases, improvements to health and safety, and stronger scheduling language.

And despite the lack of progress at the bargaining table generally, the FBA was successful in moving health employers to modify their position on a number of troublesome demands.

But so far, health employers have refused to table their position on wages and other monetary issues, despite being urged to do so repeatedly by the FBA bargaining committee.

FBA spokesperson Bonnie Pearson says that HEABC's continuous stalling over the last six months of talks has been disappointing.

"We cannot bargain in a vacuum, or with ourselves," says Pearson, who is also secretary-business manager for the Hospital Employees' Union.

"When we return to the table in September, health employers need to be prepared to table their complete set of demands – and provide a comprehensive response to our proposals – so that we can move these negotiations forward in a meaningful way."

The collective agreement covers a diverse health care team that includes workers in hospitals, nursing homes and diagnostic treatment centres as well as emergency health services and shared services such as logistics and supply operations.

About 46,000 workers in more than 270 job classifications are impacted by the talks, making it the largest single set of negotiations in the current round of public sector collective bargaining. HEU represents about 85 per cent of health care workers in the FBA. Another 14 per cent are represented by the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 873, the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union and International Union of Operating Engineers Local 882/882H. Eight other unions in the association represent one per cent of workers covered by the talks.

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