



Facilities Bargaining Association seeks strike mandate

The multi-union Facilities Bargaining Association is seeking a strike mandate from its 46,000 members to back their efforts to secure a fair and reasonable settlement in collective agreement negotiations that began last February.

Health employers have failed to move on members' priorities, and continue to demand that individual union members take on hundreds of dollars in costs for their benefit plans as a pre-condition for any wage increase.

FBA spokesperson Bonnie Pearson says that this group of health workers in particular have already sacrificed enough under the B.C. Liberals, and is calling employers' demands both disrespectful and arbitrary.

"Neither health employers nor government fully accept how determined our members are to preserve their benefits" says Pearson, who is also the Hospital Employees' Union's secretary-business manager.

"By providing their bargaining committee with a strong strike mandate, members can send a clear message to employers and government about their expectations.

"In other recent settlements in the public sector, employers have not required union members to take on significant additional costs for their benefits to subsidize half the cost of potential wage increases.

"The province has a responsibility to take a fair and balanced approach to collective bargaining with all groups of workers in the public sector," adds Pearson.

"So we expect government to review their expectations with health employers in terms of this set of negotiations."

Strike votes will begin on October 22 and wrap up approximately two weeks later.

In the meantime, talks are continuing this week.

The collective agreement includes more than 270 job classifications working at hospitals, care homes, diagnostic treatment centres, emergency health services, logistics and supply operations and corporate services.

The Hospital Employees' Union represents most union members impacted by the talks. BCGEU, BCNU, CUPE Local 873, IUOE Local 882-882H and several other unions represent the balance of members in the 12-union FBA.

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