



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

# BARGAINING BULLETIN

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## Unions seek constructive dialogue in contract talks covering 47,000 health care workers

Negotiations for a new collective agreement covering 47,000 workers in B.C. hospitals, care homes, emergency health services and the health care supply chain begin today in Vancouver.

The 11-union Facilities Bargaining Association (FBA) is hoping for a constructive round of talks focused on improving working and caring conditions in a system under pressure.

The FBA's lead negotiator, Hospital Employees' Union secretary-business manager Bonnie Pearson, says health care workers are also looking for employment security and fair and reasonable improvements in wages.

"We're urging health employers and government to show flexibility in their approach to collective bargaining in this round," says Pearson. "We're here to find solutions to some of the day-to-day problems we face in delivering health care to the public."

Pearson says the FBA unions are seeking improvements in the area of health and safety, including workload and scheduling of work.

In addition, the FBA is seeking long-overdue action on provisions covering BC Ambulance Service employees which are appendices in the Facilities agreement.

The current collective agreement expires March 31, 2014.

The Hospital Employees' Union represents about 85 per cent of health care workers covered by these talks. A further 14 per cent are represented by CUPE Local 873, the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union, and the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 882/882H.

A further seven unions represent less than one per cent of workers in the FBA and are collectively represented at the bargaining table by the Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers Local 5.

The diverse bargaining unit of more than 270 job classifications includes care aides, ambulance paramedics, health records staff, laboratory and other diagnostic specialists, sterile supply technicians, emergency dispatch personnel, trades and maintenance workers, activity aides and rehab assistants, IT specialists, pharmacy technicians, admitting and booking clerks, administrative staff, cleaning and dietary staff, and many others.

These negotiations represent the largest single group of workers covered by a single contract in B.C.'s public sector.

*January 14, 2014*

