



Facilities complete two weeks of bargaining talks

Two weeks of 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 are now completed.

Representatives of the Health Employers Association of BC and the 11-union Facilities Bargaining Association (FBA) exchanged proposals on a number of non-monetary issues at the bargaining table.

“Our members are committed to providing quality health care, but to get the best care for patients, the unions at this bargaining table are calling on employers to address long-standing issues about working conditions and health and safety,” said Bonnie Pearson, FBA lead negotiator and Hospital Employees’ Union (HEU) secretary-business manager.

“We identified scheduling, the health impacts of shift work, and the need to reduce injury rates, workload and bullying as priorities,” said Pearson.

The FBA also stressed the importance of addressing the bargaining objectives of the B.C. Ambulance Service CUPE 873 and B.C. Government and Service Employees’ Union (BCGEU) Administrative Unit of the B.C. Emergency Health Services in this round of bargaining.

Negotiations are scheduled to resume on February 11.

Four unions – HEU, CUPE Local 873, the BCGEU, and the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 882/882H – represent just over 99 per cent of health care workers covered by these talks. The less than one per cent of FBA workers represented by seven other unions are collectively represented in negotiations by the Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers Local 5.

More than 270 job classifications make up the FBA covering 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.

The current collective agreement expires March 31, 2014. These negotiations represent the largest single group of workers covered by a single contract in B.C.’s public sector.

January 24, 2014

