



Community health bargaining underway

Bargaining for HEU members covered by the community health collective agreement got underway this week with the Health Employers Association of British Columbia (HEABC) in Vancouver.

HEABC and the multi-union Community Bargaining Association (CBA) reviewed priorities and tabled proposals on May 16. The current collective agreement between the parties expires March 31, 2019.

“Negotiations have opened to a smooth start,” says HEU secretary-business manager Jennifer Whiteside. “This time there is a more positive bargaining atmosphere and a greater understanding on the employer side of the table about the value of community health workers.”

The significance of the change in the bargaining climate can't be understated, says Whiteside. “In order to begin addressing the problems caused by 16 years of neglect, we have to start from a place of mutual respect. I think a lot can be accomplished when the contributions of workers are recognized, valued and respected.”

Bargaining proposals will push for increased funding and benefits and seek to address the critical issues of recruitment and retention, as well as precarious work schedules. Both parties recognized that building a more robust community health sector is essential for accommodating an aging population.

The Community Bargaining Association represents about 16,000 unionized workers in community health around the province. HEU is one of eight unions represented in the Community Health Bargaining Association (CBA) which includes the BCGEU, UFCW, HEU, CUPE, HSA, USWA, CLAC and BCNU.

HEU's bargaining representatives are Jessica Herzig (Prince George Local), Alyisha Knapp (Central Cariboo Local), and Janine Migneault and Gina Horne (Community Services 1998 Local). HEU's bargaining team also includes Chris Dorais (director, Fraser region) and Ronnie Nicolasora (staff representative).

Bargaining is scheduled to continue for approximately five weeks. Stay tuned to heu.org for regular updates on negotiations.

If you would like to receive CBA bargaining updates directly, please send your name and contact info to members@heu.org or text 604-209-3861.

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