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Facilities subsector contract talks to kick off in September

Negotiations for a new collective agreement – covering 44,000 workers in British Columbia’s health care system – are set to begin on September 11 between the multi-union Facilities Bargaining Association (FBA) and the Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC).

Facilities subsector members work in hospitals, residential care homes, health clinics, corporate offices and supply warehouses – in more than 270 job classifications – throughout the province.

The bargaining process was launched in May when more than 200 HEU delegates gathered for the union’s 21st Facilities Bargaining Conference. Members debated and voted on demands – submitted by locals, equity standing committees, and the Provincial Executive – and also elected a new bargaining committee.

HEU’s bargaining team includes Jesse Winfrey (Cowichan Valley), Debbie Dyer (Royal Columbian), Erica Carr (PHSA Amalgamated), Dexter Basbas (St. Paul’s), Candace Charalambidis (Victoria General), Donna Thibeault (Boundary), Heather Barschel (Prince George), Ivy Eriksen (Campbell River), Debra Quesnel (Swan Valley) and Barbara Owen (Royal Columbian).

HEU secretary-business manager Jennifer Whiteside is the chief negotiator for the FBA. She will be joined at the bargaining table by the union’s president Victor Elkins and financial secretary Donisa Bernardo.

“We will be fighting fiercely for changes that will improve care and provide safer, more economically secure jobs for HEU members,” says Whiteside. “And when it comes to restructuring in health care, we’ll be demanding a seat at the table to help guide further change. Because what we want is a system that makes our members’ working lives better, not worse.”

The multi-union FBA, led by HEU with 41,000 facilities members, also covers workers in nine other unions, including the B.C. Government and Service Employees’ Union and the International Union of Operating Engineers.

Stay informed by visiting the HEU website (heu.org) bargaining section, or by signing up to the union’s email list on the HEU homepage.

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