



Bargaining Bulletin

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

THE HEART OF HEALTH CARE

Worksite union representation a key bargaining issue for paramedicals

TALKS CONTINUED last week between the Paramedical Professional Bargaining Association and the Health Employers Association of B.C. for a new collective agreement.

Union negotiators focused on the role of union stewards in labour-management relations at the local facility level. HEABC brought forward demands that would severely limit the unions' ability to function in the workplace. While a number of issues were debated, at the end of two days of bargaining, the parties were unable to agree on a set of guidelines.

Union representation, especially on the ground, has emerged as a key issue. Due to the complicated nature of health care restructuring, the PPBA feels strongly that union stewards must be present when workers are displaced to ensure that members clearly understand their rights and options.

"HEU stewards are invaluable for dealing with issues at the local level face-to-face

with employers," says the union's secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. "They are essential to maintaining productive labour relations.

"Member representation is one of the main reasons workers organize to join a union and we won't allow employers to violate that fundamental principle," he says.

The parties return to the bargaining table on March 23 – 25 in Vancouver. The current collective agreement expires on March 31.

The Health Sciences Association, the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the Professional Employees' Association and the Hospital Employees' Union make up the PPBA.

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NUMBER

P3

