



Newsletter

Health unions renew demands for targeted exemptions to 11 per cent wage cuts

HEABC to respond next week but cites media reports that labour minister ruled out exemptions

HEU AND ITS UNION PARTNERS in the Facilities Bargaining Association have provided the Health Employers Association of B.C. with a detailed list of classifications that need to be exempted from government legislated wage rollbacks because of emerging retention and recruitment problems.

And while B.C.'s health employers didn't rule out acting on the unions' demands at a meeting Wednesday, HEABC did cite media reports that B.C. labour minister Graham Bruce ruled out exemptions to the 11 per cent wage rollback contained in Bill 37.

The health unions provided HEABC with a detailed list of job classifications that need to be exempted from the 11 per cent wage cut including LPNs, the patient care technical family (including ECG and Cardio Techs), IT jobs in computer and data processing, trades, maintenance supervisors, Biomedical Electronics Technologists, Power Engineers, MW5 classifications and above as well as all classifications in the miscellaneous job family (e.g. Media Services Techs).

"The looming retention crisis facing health care in B.C. is real and requires immediate action from health employers and government," says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. "It's a message that local health employers are hearing from our members right across the province and it's a message they need to take seriously."

Other important issues raised at the June 2 meeting with HEABC included:

Implementation of the 37.5 hour work week – the unions told HEABC that longer hours should be reflected in more service to the public by extending the work week for full-time positions. Health employers say that they have the option of converting full-time positions to part-time with no additional service to the public.

The two sides also disagree on when an extended work week would be implemented.

LTD -- the unions repeated their demand that the supplementary benefit for pre-1998 LTD claimants should be continued. But HEABC says that these claimants should expect to lose their supplementary benefit in July.

Occupational Health and Safety Agency -- renewed funding for OHSAH was raised once again by the unions. HEABC says it will deal with OHSAH funding in its negotiations with the Nurses Bargaining Association.

Pay rates, the work week and the supplementary LTD benefit could all be subject to the arbitration process contained in Article 11 of the collective agreement if not resolved through discussions with HEABC. Allnutt says he expects to hear from health employers next week.

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