



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEBRUARY 11, 2019

Hospital and long-term care workers vote to ratify three-year collective agreement

New agreement restores contracting out protections stripped by previous Liberal government; includes provisions to tackle workload and improve safety

[BURNABY, B.C.] – Nearly 44,000 health care workers represented by the multi-union Facilities Bargaining Association (FBA) have a new collective agreement that includes important job security, health and safety, and compensation improvements.

Union members voted 89 per cent in favour of ratifying the three-year deal reached with B.C.'s public health employers last December. The votes took place between Jan. 21 and Feb. 8.

Hospital Employees' Union (HEU) secretary-business manager Jennifer Whiteside, the unions' chief negotiator, says the agreement tackles health and safety issues, and restores contracting-out protections stripped by the former B.C. Liberal government in 2002.

"Health care workers will be safer and their jobs more secure as a result of this agreement," says Whiteside. "After 16 years of privatization and unstable workplaces, we have an opportunity to strengthen services to the public by improving working and caring conditions of our members."

The new contract includes general wage increases of six per cent, in line with government's current negotiating mandate for the public sector. In addition, entry level wages will be raised by phasing out lower steps in the wage grid. A number of shift premiums have also been improved.

The agreement will re-establish a provincial organization focusing on occupational health and safety in health care – a sector with among the highest rates of injuries in B.C. The provincial government will provide \$8.5 million over three years to support this objective.

"We need system-wide improvements to drive down injury rates and make real progress towards safer workplaces," says Whiteside. "Focusing resources on OH&S best practices and ensuring they are scaled up across the sector is the right approach."

The agreement runs from April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2022 and covers a broad range of workers in hospitals, long-term care, corporate offices, supply warehouses and health clinics. They work in hundreds of job classifications in direct patient and resident care, as well as in support services, technical, clerical and trades and maintenance areas.

HEU represents more than 90 per cent of workers covered by the agreement. The ten-union FBA also includes members from the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union and the International Union of Operating Engineers.

-30-

Contact: Patty Gibson, Director of Communications
604-456-7007 (direct) or 604-328-7393 (mobile)

BARB NEDERPEL, President • JENNIFER WHITESIDE, Secretary-Business Manager • BETTY VALENZUELA, Financial Secretary
5000 North Fraser Way, Burnaby, BC V5J 5M3 • TEL: 604-438-5000 • FAX: 604-739-1510 • WEB: www.heu.org
The BC Health Services Division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees