

Facilities Bargaining Association

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MEDIA RELEASE
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Health care workers ratify collective agreement in province-wide vote

Health care workers have ratified a new five-year collective agreement by a vote of 64.6 per cent.

The agreement between the 11-union Facilities Bargaining Association and government's bargaining agent – the Health Employers Association of B.C. – covers 47,000 workers in hospitals, care homes, emergency health services, logistics and supply warehouses, and other settings.

It includes 5.5 per cent in general wage increases, a cap on contracting out of 500 full-time equivalent positions over the life of the agreement, a transition to joint administration of benefits, and continued funding of a union-managed education and skills upgrading program.

In a separate set of provisions relating to ambulance paramedics and dispatchers, negotiated changes maintain distinct language covering ambulance services while addressing long-standing issues within the collective agreement.

The agreement was reached after union members delivered a 96 per cent strike mandate to their negotiating team in May.

Hospital Employees' Union secretary-business manager Bonnie Pearson says the agreement provides some stability and certainty in a sector that's been racked by privatization and restructuring.

“At the same time, the vote results should send a clear signal to government that health care workers are impatient with government's inflexible and tight-fisted attitude at the bargaining table,” says Pearson, who is the chief spokesperson for the FBA.

The Hospital Employees' Union represents about 85 per cent of health care workers covered by these talks. A further 14 per cent are represented by CUPE Local 873, the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union, and the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 882/882H.

Another seven unions represent less than one per cent of workers in the FBA are represented at the bargaining table by the Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers Local 5.

The bargaining unit includes care aides, ambulance paramedics, health records staff, lab and other diagnostic specialists, sterile supply techs, renal technicians, emergency dispatchers, nursing unit clerks, trades and maintenance workers, activity aides and rehab assistants, IT specialists, pharmacy techs, admitting and booking clerks, administrative staff, cleaning and dietary staff, and many others.

The term of the agreement is April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2019.

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