



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

# NEWSLETTER

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## HEU's patient care technical team has solid agenda for bargaining priorities

About 60 HEU members representing the patient care technical team met at the union's Provincial Office on September 20 and 21 to set the stage for next year's bargaining as it pertains to their occupational job family. The facilities subsector collective agreement is set to expire on March 31, 2012.

During the two-day pre-bargaining conference, HEU's patient care technical workers from across the province spoke about the diverse nature of their highly specialized jobs, and their workplace challenges – like increased responsibilities and duties, pressures to be 100 per cent accurate with expectations to multi-task and set critical priorities, high burnout from unreasonable rotations and workload, health and safety issues, upgrading skills to keep pace with evolving technology, and changing scopes of practice.



In a lively session, they also debated their bargaining demands to devise a short list of priorities.



Those priorities will be taken by the Provincial Executive to the Facilities Bargaining Conference in November.

On the first day, Judy Darcy, who recently resigned from HEU to pursue provincial politics, introduced Bonnie Pearson, the union's new secretary-business manager. Pearson has more than 30 years of experience working in the public and private sector, and has worked at HEU as the coordinator of servicing and most recently, assistant secretary-business manager.

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“She is smart. She is strategic. She has a killer sense of humour and there is nobody better to tackle the employer than Bonnie Pearson,” said Darcy. “She’s a woman who has dedicated an enormous amount of enthusiasm and commitment to HEU.”

Over the course of the conference, members participated in unity-building and advocacy workshops. There were also presentations by the union’s servicing director Chris Dorais (consolidation and shared services), and communications director Mike Old (social networking). Representatives also had an opportunity to seek clarity on classifications, benchmarks, the bargaining process, and interpreting non-cost versus cost items with HEU’s new assistant secretary-business manager Jacquie de Aguayo.



In her bargaining address, Pearson painted a clear picture of the current political and economic realities in the province and their impact on public sector bargaining. She also highlighted the impact health care restructuring is having on the patient care technical team and what the union’s doing to support those affected.



“We’ve managed to protect our members’ rights through this disruption because of provisions we negotiated in the last round of bargaining,” said Pearson. “We negotiated long and hard to keep members impacted by SSO in the facilities contract – employers had suggested that they would be moved to the community health contract.

“We also negotiated a standard template and a transfer agreement, providing our members with continuity of representation and job security. And we now have health authority-wide seniority.”

Conference participants included medical lab assistants and phlebotomists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy assistants, ophthalmic photographers/technicians, medical device reprocessing technicians (central supply/sterile supply departments), programs/systems analysts and IT/computer technicians, certified dental assistants, technical assistants, renal technicians, dietary supervisors, and buyers.



In her closing remarks, HEU’s financial secretary encouraged members to talk to their co-workers to garner support for their bargaining priorities, and also to deliver a clear message to their families, neighbours and communities about the contribution all HEU members make to B.C.’s health care system.