



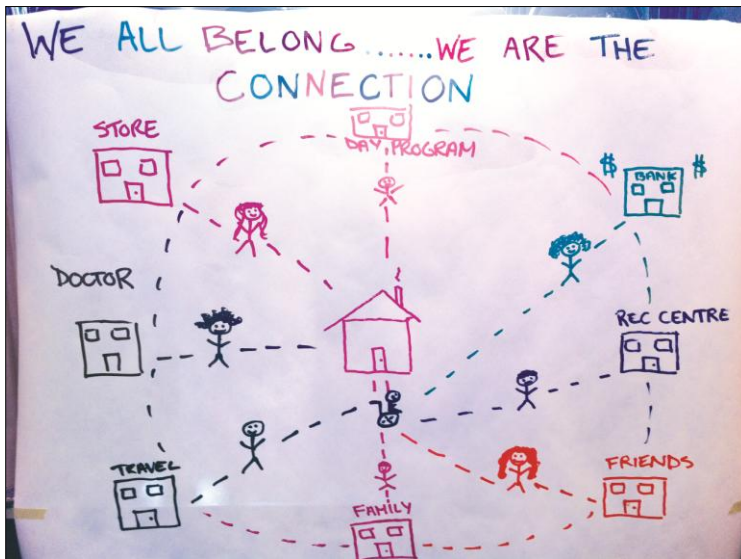
HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

# NEWSLETTER

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## Community Social Services members prepare for 2012 bargaining

About 30 HEU members working in community social services, many of them new activists, gathered in Victoria on November 30 and December 1 to elect a new bargaining team and prepare for upcoming negotiations in 2012.



During the two-day bargaining conference members worked through a series of bargaining demands to establish wage increases, job security and restoration of sick time among their top priorities for the next round of bargaining.

Delegates were joined by representatives from both CUPE BC and BCGEU.

The conference comes on the heels of an exceptionally tough round of bargaining in the multi-

union sector, which took almost two years to reach a tentative settlement that was finally ratified on October 14.

HEU secretary-business manager Bonnie Pearson recognized the union's outgoing bargaining team for their hard work and commitment through difficult contract talks, and thanked members across the sector for the "incredible support" they gave to their bargaining representatives – Marilyn Rust, David Huespe, and Bob Wilson.

Pearson had high praise for all members in their day-to-day work saying, "I only wish we had a government that was half as dedicated as you. One that would give you the recognition and respect you truly deserve. Because face it, without you, British Columbia simply cannot provide the support people need, when they need it."

She pointed out that the sector is barely coping with a huge retention and recruitment problem.

"And we all know, it's not bricks and mortar that provides care," she said. "It's people – trained, skilled, experienced people."

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The impact of deteriorating retention and recruitment conditions surfaced throughout discussions as members spoke about the employer's lack of ability to recruit qualified staff. As a result, experienced workers are not only expected to orient new staff to the workplace, but train them as well.

And once again, it became clear that an increasing number of members are working at more than one job just to make ends meet.

During the conference delegates also heard from HEU president Ken Robinson and HEU financial secretary Donisa Bernardo who thanked members for their activism and pledged the full backing of their union in 2012 contract negotiations.

HEU's second vice president and community social services member Louella Vincent was also on hand to welcome delegates, chair plenary sessions and encourage member participation in the bargaining process.



Special guest Nicholas Simons, MLA and opposition critic for community living, received a warm reception from conference delegates for his perseverance in keeping the many issues impacting people with developmental disabilities front and centre in both the legislature and the media.

Simons condemned the Clark government for its unwillingness to provide the financial resources needed to support community living programs and services.

Delegates also elected a new bargaining team - David Huespe (Western Human Resources) and Tasha Whenham (Kardel Consulting) along with alternates Richard Brens (VACL/VCRS) and Jessica Steele (Becon Services).

Outgoing bargaining committee Marilyn Rust received a special round of thanks for her years of dedicated service on several HEU bargaining committees and for her unwavering commitment to members' issues.

HEU is one of nine unions represented in the Community Social Services Bargaining Association. Bargaining demands generated by the conference will be sent to CSSBA in early January.

*December 5, 2011*