



## HEU signs Pharmacy Tech deal with Northern Health

HEU has signed an agreement to support Pharmacy Technician members in the Northern Health Authority who want to convert to the new higher paid regulated role.

With the signing of this agreement, HEU has now reached agreements to support Pharmacy Technician members in every Health Authority in the province. The first agreement, covering the Lower Mainland Pharmacy Services (Fraser Health, Vancouver Coastal, Providence Health Care, And Children and Women's Hospital), was signed last August. More agreements followed for the BC Cancer Agency, Interior Health Authority, and Vancouver Island Health Authority.

HEU's secretary business-manager Bonnie Pearson says, "our union has established higher pay opportunities for pharmacy tech members, as well as financial support and a clear pathway to that higher pay."

The new agreement provides a sufficient number of conditional conversion opportunities (CCOs) for every regular pharmacy tech member currently working in the North. The process provides a guarantee for members who accept CCOs that their position will be converted to the new regulated role upon their completion of the upgrading program. The process is optional for members.

This follows last month's arbitrated award, in which HEU secured a 7.3 per cent pay increase for the regulated Pharmacy Tech benchmark.

Members who accept CCOs under this agreement are eligible for financial support directly from the employer of up to \$1500 for course costs and \$500 for exam costs. Members taking the upgrading are also eligible for \$750 per year from the Northern Health Tuition Reimbursement Program and \$300 from the Spirit of the North Foundation.

Members who accepted CCOs in other Health Authorities also received financial support. In those agreements the support came through the union's FBA Education Fund.

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## **Highlights of the agreement**

Please refer to the agreement (available on website) for full details. Below are the main points of the agreement:

- Conditional conversion opportunities (CCOs) are available for all regular members to convert their current job to a higher-paid regulated position once they become registered with the College.
- The new pay grid of 32 (a 7.3% pay increase over the current grid) will be effective immediately upon final registration with the College.
- The next expression of interest for CCOs from Northern Health Authority will be October 1, 2012 with a closing date for members of October 8, 2012.
- Seniority will determine who receives conditional conversion opportunities in each round if more members apply than there are opportunities available.
- Conditional conversion opportunities are not part of a job posting process, meaning that no one will bid on anyone else's job through this process.
- Conditional conversion opportunities are available to full-time and part-time employees working at the site for which they are applying for conversion.
- Members must complete the upgrading and register with the College within two years for their position to convert to a regulated pharmacy technician.

Last year, changes were made to the regulation governing pharmacy practice and as a result the job title "Pharmacy Technician" became a reserved title for the regulated profession registered with the College of Pharmacists. Qualifications for registration require the completion of the new Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs' curriculum, or the shortened bridging version for those already working in pharmacy practice. Pharmacy technicians who become regulated will work more independently and with less supervision from a pharmacist.

You should speak with your shop steward or servicing representative if you have any questions.

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