



## Job security, protecting benefits among top priorities at Facilities bargaining conference

More than 230 HEU delegates concluded deliberations at the union's 20th Facilities Bargaining Conference in Vancouver on Friday, setting the union's course for the next round of bargaining.

In particular, job security and protecting benefits – along with a fair wage increase – were identified by delegates, providing a focused and strategic direction to HEU's newly elected 13-person bargaining committee.



The two-and-a-half day conference brought together members from across the province to deliberate and vote on bargaining demands submitted by the union's locals. They also voted on bargaining priorities stemming from this fall's occupational conference.

HEU secretary business manager Bonnie Pearson, the union's chief negotiator, applauded delegates for their focus and discipline in setting priorities for the 2014 round.



"Delegates were pretty clear about their members' desire for a fair wage increase and to protect their comprehensive benefit coverage," says Pearson.

"There's also no question that job security – protecting our work from privatization – will be a top priority for our bargaining committee."

"We're going to have another tough round of bargaining, all indicators tell us that," adds Pearson.

"Delegates to this bargaining conference understood that in this bargaining environment we'll need to be focused and strategic in order to succeed at the bargaining table next year."

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Jim Sinclair, president of the B.C. Federation of Labour, gave greetings to delegates on behalf of 500,000 union members across the province on Wednesday night. He talked about the importance of HEU's anti-contracting out language in protecting public health care from profiteers.

"Privatization is a cancer," said Sinclair. "It's a cancer that destroys the services that you provide."

Votes for ten of thirteen HEU positions on the FBA bargaining committee took place on Friday. Ten alternates were also elected. HEU secretary business manager Bonnie Pearson, president Victor Elkins and financial secretary Donisa Bernardo are automatically members and make up the balance of the 13 positions HEU holds in its majority position on the multi-union Facilities Bargaining Association negotiating committee.



"I want to thank all the delegates who sought bargaining committee positions for the energy, ideas and commitment they bring to HEU," said Pearson. "As well, I want to congratulate the ten members who were elected today to serve as HEU's representatives for this next round of Facilities bargaining – it's great having such a solid mix of experienced and knowledgeable members at your side when facing the employer across the table."

The ten members elected to the new facilities bargaining committee are: Joyce Beddow (care aide, Ashcroft Local), Mike Cartwright (power engineer, Prince George Local), Winston Clarke (maintenance worker, Queen's Park Local), Mark Crawford (stores attendant, VGH Local), Mary Ann Desjardins (care aide, Victoria General Local), Debbie Dyer (nursing unit assistant, Royal Columbian Local), Ruby Kandola (pharmacy technician, Surrey Local), Jim Kelly (operations analyst, PHSA Amalgamated Local), Karen McVeigh (care aide, Dogwood Local), and Deborah Quesnel (food service worker, Swan Valley Local).

Other issues members debated and discussed at the conference included challenges with implementation of the current contract's PharmaCare tie-in, and the impact of inadequate staffing levels and shift work on workers' health and safety.

The facilities subsector collective agreement covers the majority of HEU members working in B.C.'s acute care hospitals and residential care homes, and is set to expire on March 31, 2014.