

Tuesday, November 4



HEU delegates kick off 29th biennial convention on a high note

In honour of HEU's 70th anniversary, this year's convention opened with a rousing rap-infused rendition of the union's signature anthem, "Heart of Health Care."

Throughout the day, the 624 delegates – along with guests and staff – heard from several speakers and tackled the business of the union.

HEU financial secretary Donisa Bernardo reported on the financial highlights of the last two years saying that overall, the union's fiscal outlook is healthy and secure.

She reminded delegates that "if we are to remain strong and capable of taking on whatever challenges the future may have in store, it is critical that we have the resources we need when required."

"I truly believe that what we build today must be just as lasting for those who come after us, as we have inherited from those that came before us," said Bernardo.

Vancouver and District Labour Council president Joey Hartman recounted some of HEU's milestones, congratulating the union for its achievements – especially its 2007 Charter victory establishing collective bargaining rights for all workers.

CUPE National president Paul Moist saluted the union for its seven decades of progress saying "you stand upon the shoulders of the brave women and men who built HEU."



HEU Financial secretary Donisa Bernardo

He congratulated delegates for passing a resolution earlier in the day that he said "vowed to fight to defend and expand public medicare for every citizen in Canada."

"I've always known that HEU gets it," said Moist, promising to expand on CUPE's initial support for the legal fight against private clinics.

Progressive doctors call for united front on Medicare

Dr. Brian Day must be defeated.

That was the takeaway by HEU members after listening to Monday's keynote speaker Dr. Monika Dutt, chairperson of the Canadian Doctors for Medicare.

Speaking against private health care booster Dr. Brian Day and his fight to bring back for-profit medicare to Canada, Dr. Dutt made it clear what was at stake for patients and workers.

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In Day's world, we are no longer patients," said Dutt. "We are consumers."

That couldn't be made clearer following a 2008 provincial audit of the Cambie Surgery Corporation owned by Day.

Over a single 30-day period, the review determined Day overcharged patients by more than \$491,000 and double-claimed fees to the government for nearly \$67,000.

When ordered to stop overbilling, Day's response was to mount the most serious attack on Canada's cherished health care system since it was created. Day filed a constitutional challenge that puts the fundamentals of medicare at risk.

And while the case was supposed to begin last September, the proceedings are on hold while Day and the province attempt to resolve the matter. However, no one should assume this legal attack on public health care is over by any stretch.

If negotiations fail, Day and his supporters will be back before B.C. Supreme Court in March, challenging the very foundation of our health system, said Dutt.

"This case has become what even Dr. Day has agreed is 'ground zero' in the fight over the future of medicare," said Dutt. "Simply put, if he wins, there is no Medicare."

It's critical going forward that all organizations fighting to protect universal health care – the HEU, the BC Health Coalition and the Canadian

Doctors for Medicare – work together to defeat Day in the courts and in the public.

"If health care becomes an issue of consumer choice, we will lose the principles of universal access and equity that have shaped our system," said Dutt.

"We would no longer be a society that has pooled

our resources and expressed our social solidarity in way that strives to achieve a quality health care system for all in Canada."



Dr. Monika Dutt, Canadian Doctors for Medicare



One last chance!

Get your photo on the cover of the Guardian – noon to 1:30 p.m Tuesday in the Turner Room (4th Floor)

Coming up later on Tuesday...

- Equity Night, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., Plaza A, B and C.
- Young Workers' Night at the Railway Club, 579 Dunsmuir (after Equity Night).
- Check out the HEU History Room during breaks and lunch Tuesday in the King George Room.