



Lower Mainland Regulated Pharmacy Technician update

About 70 per cent of Pharmacy Techs have now completed bridging program

This spring, HEU and Lower Mainland Pharmacy Services (LMPS) representatives met to review the status of transitioning to a new pharmacy services model.

In January 2016, Lower Mainland health authorities plan to deliver pharmacy services through a staffing mix of Regulated Pharmacy Technicians and Pharmacy Assistants.

Due to regulatory changes introduced by the College of Pharmacists of British Columbia and approved by the Ministry of Health, use of the job title “pharmacy technician” was restricted as of January 1, 2011 to those who met specific educational criteria.

But an agreement was negotiated by the union to give existing Pharmacy Technicians the resources and opportunity to upgrade their skills to become “regulated”.

Since then, HEU Pharmacy Technicians have been offered bridging courses to convert to a “regulated” designation – many through the financial support of the FBA Education Fund, first negotiated in the 2006 round of facilities bargaining.

According to the employer, about 70 per cent of Pharmacy Technicians in the Lower Mainland have now completed a bridging program. Those who choose not to upgrade their status will remain classified as “Pharmacy Assistants” after December 31, 2015.

However, those individuals may be impacted when the staffing ratios of Regulated Pharmacy Technicians and Pharmacy Assistants are established at each work site.

Members in Pharmacy who complete their bridging and register with the College of Pharmacists within the timeline will become Regulated Pharmacy Technicians. They will keep their existing position without displacement or reposting, and they will receive the new higher rate of pay (grid 32).

At this point, the bridging program will no longer be available after December 31.

Becoming a Regulated Pharmacy Technician increases pay rates, maximizes future opportunities, and minimizes impact on existing positions in the future.

While implementing the new model, LMPS and HEU will meet over the next couple of months to make the transition as smooth as possible with minimal disruption to members.

If you have questions about any aspect of the Pharmacy Tech conversion agreement and options, please contact your shop steward.

July 15, 2015