



Arbitrator makes progress on fixing wage gap in Community sector

On March 3, the Labour Relations Board-appointed arbitrator Vince Ready made several key rulings that will help narrow the wage gap between the majority of 14,000 health care workers in the Community sector and their counterparts in the Facilities sector.

The wage hike – called a comparability increase – totals two per cent over two years and will apply to some Community health care workers carrying out similar work as those working in the Facilities sector, when comparing the benchmarks. In all, nearly 80 per cent of Community sector workers are expected to receive the increase.

The increase was secured by the multi-union Community Bargaining Association (CBA) representing workers during negotiations with the Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC) during bargaining for the 2014-2019 collective agreement. However, at the time, the two sides were unable to reach agreement on which members would be eligible, preventing the increase from taking effect.

Following ratification of the current collective agreement, talks between the CBA and HEABC to resolve these outstanding issues resumed. Discussions continued until late last year without success, prompting the two sides to agree in mid-December to arbitration under Vince Ready.

In his ruling, Ready outlined the benchmarks that determine the work in the Facilities sector to be considered when matching work performed by members in the Community sector. However, he sent the issue of which Community sector job classifications are eligible for the increase back to the two sides for further negotiations.

The increase for eligible members will be retroactive to the first full pay period after April 1, 2016, once negotiations are successfully concluded. The first wage hikes will be one per cent on April 1, 2016, followed by a 0.5 per cent increase on both April 1, 2017 and April 1, 2018.

Please also note, once an agreement is reached with the HEABC, the full details regarding which job classifications are eligible for the increase will be made available to members.

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