



# A Different Sort of Labour Day

September 6, 2021

## A message from HSA President Kane Tse

Labour Day is usually a time spent reflecting on the past. We remember the contributions of working people, celebrate the many victories, and remind ourselves and the world of the importance of collective action.

But this has been a very different year. We don't have to recall the distant past to see the remarkable commitment of working people in BC. We're seeing history being made, all around us, in real time.

This pandemic has pushed all of us in ways we would never have imagined two short years ago. It has tested us in so many different ways – professionally and personally. And it has revealed the inner strength and resolve of those who work to serve others.

Working people – especially those in health care and community social services – have had to blaze new trails, re-imagining what workplace safety, support and solidarity looks like.

Our members are at the forefront of this fight – every single day.

New to the role of President, I've spent the last few months listening to members and really grounding myself in the diversity of the work our members do. I've heard from you about the toll this pandemic has taken.

This has been a tough road for many – and it is not done yet.

Each of you have adjusted to new ways of serving patients and clients, adjusted to new PPE protocols, and ever-changing guidelines and policies and to a new pace of work that hasn't eased off in over a year.

I am hearing from professionals across the province about burn-out, stress and anxiety. I am hearing about unreasonable overtime demands, scarce vacation time, and increased caseloads. This is not sustainable.

And yet – because of your remarkable dedication, your strength and spirit, you continue to help British Columbians in every community of the province stay safe and healthy. As health care workers, we stepped forward when our province needed us the most, as we delivered under the uncertainty about the then-emerging threat of COVID-19.

As we eventually move into the post-COVID era, we must seize the moment to address shortages in health care and social services. It is more important than ever that our public health care system is robust and resilient – and that system can't function without you.

As part of the broader labour movement, we must add our voice to the call for government policies that strengthen and build our communities and the economy: 10 days of paid sick leave, better rights and protections for injured workers, and expanded mental health supports like presumptive coverage.

So on this Labour Day, as we pay tribute to the workers who came before us, I want to also pay tribute to the workers standing with us right now.

I want to pay tribute to each of you.

It is a real honour to represent you as President for HSA, and a privilege to represent our diverse and dedicated family of professionals. I look forward to what we will be able to achieve together.

Kane Tse

HSA President

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