



# Community social services workers to commence strike on International Women's Day over wage discrimination

February 25, 1999

Ten thousand workers in the community social services sector will commence a province-wide strike on International Women's Day, March 8, in an effort to end wage and benefit discrimination for women in the sector.

Negotiators for the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU), Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Hospital Employees' Union (HEU) and Health Sciences Association (HSA) outlined the strike strategy at a joint meeting of the bargaining committees in Richmond today.

"On International Women's Day, March 8, community social services workers around the province will commence the withdrawal of all non-essential services," said Cliff Andstein, chief negotiator for the BCGEU.

HSA negotiator, Julio Trujillo, said the unions have called on the government to live up to its commitment to end wage and benefit discrimination against women in community social services, but have yet to receive that commitment. "We regret that the government's refusal to live up to its promises to these workers has left our members with no other choice but to go on strike for fairness and respect," Trujillo said.

Marilynn Rust, who chairs the HEU community social services bargaining committee, said: "It is ironic that on International Women's Day, when we should be celebrating the gains women have made, 10,000 community social services workers who are mostly women are forced to strike in an effort to end years of wage and benefit discrimination."

Barry O'Neill, President of CUPE BC, added, "our members care for and work with the most vulnerable members of our society, including very young children and adults with physical or developmental disabilities. They deliver a huge range of services to thousands of families across this province. The last thing our members want to do is go on strike, but they deserve to be treated fairly at the bargaining table."

Job action will commence on March 8, affecting service delivery in four sectors: community living, family and children's services, services to women and child care. Essential services will be maintained.

Striking community social services workers will also hold noon-hour rallies on March 8 at the Vancouver Public Library (350 W. Georgia) and in Victoria at the B.C. legislature.

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