



Health science professionals, employers agree to process to conclude contract talks

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Then Paramedical Professional Bargaining Association (PPBA), which represents health science professionals working in BC's health care system, has reached a framework agreement with HEABC. Health science professionals deliver the clinical, diagnostic and rehabilitation services in the public health care system in B.C.

Under the terms of the framework agreement, there will be no net increase to wages and benefits for the duration of the two-year agreement, which expires March 31, 2006. It removes the employers' concession demands from the bargaining table and creates a climate for constructive negotiation of a number of contract issues. The terms of the agreement mean that health science professionals covered by the PPBA agreement will not see any changes in the collective agreement that would adversely affect health and welfare benefits, vacation, sick leave and severance.

"Given the current climate set by the provincial government, I am pleased that HEABC was able to work with the union bargaining association to develop an agreement that protects wages and benefits and paves the way for discussion about issues important to the delivery of quality health care for British Columbians," said Chief Negotiator Ron Ohmart of the Health Sciences Association (HSA), which represents 90 per cent of the health science professionals covered by the contract.

Discussion on a limited number of issues is to be concluded by July 30, 2004. If agreement is reached on any items, the two parties agree to recommend changes to the collective agreement for ratification. If there is no agreement, they will recommend that the current contract be rolled over for two-year period ending March 31, 2006.

"With concessions now off the table, I am optimistic we can talk about issues in the health care system that need co-operative and constructive solutions to ensure the best delivery of services to patients," Ohmart said.

The PPBA represents approximately 13,000 health science professionals in the Health Sciences Association of BC (HSA), BC Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU), Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Professional Employees' Association (PEA), and the Hospital Employees' Union (HEU).

-30-

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