



# Bargaining Update #4: Stewards' role defended in bargaining

March 8, 2004

**PARAMEDICAL PROFESSIONAL BARGAINING ASSOCIATION**  
**Bargaining Update #4**  
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## **Union representation a key issue in most recent talks**

Talks continued last week between the Paramedical Professional Bargaining Association (PPBA) and the Health Employers Association of BC for a new contract. The current contract expires March 31.

Union negotiators focused on the role of union stewards in labour-management relations at the local facility level. HEABC brought forward a number of proposals that would severely limit the unions ability to function in the workplace. While a number of issues were debated, at the end of two days of bargaining, the two parties were unable to agree on a set of guidelines.

PPBA Chief Negotiator Ron Ohmart said the unions feel very strongly, given the complicated nature of health care restructuring, that stewards be present when members are displaced to ensure that the members clearly understand their rights and options.

-HSA relies on the excellent role stewards play in dealing with issues before they become problems that are difficult to address locally. Properly trained and experienced stewards are invaluable assets for productive labour relations ... and we intend to keep our stewards involved at the local level," he said.

Talks resume March 23 to 25 in Vancouver.

## **With strike vote in facilities subsector, essential services negotiations must be completed**

The Facilities Bargaining Association announced Sunday that a strike vote will be conducted among the 43,000 hospital and long term care workers among its members. Members of the Hospital Employees Union, BC Government and Service Employees Union and International Union of Operating Engineers will complete the strike votes by the end of the month. The contract expires March 31, 2004.

With the potential for job action in the health care system, it is extremely important that Essential Services Agreements are completed as soon as possible. Stewards must send locally negotiated agreements to the HSA office for sign-off by their Labour Relations Officer (LRO).

If you require further information, please contact your LRO.

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