



Community health unions table wage package

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Contract talks for 13,000 community health workers are focused this week on compensation issues as the unions outlined their plan for a fair pay boost along with measures to make up for lost ground. Meanwhile, employers countered with an opening offer of a wage increase that fails to keep pace with inflation.

The package tabled by the union bargaining association includes the following increases in a three year contract:

- **Year 1:** effective April 1, 2006 a three per cent general wage increase, plus restoration of the wage roll back implemented in 2004 which amounts to a 4.21 per cent boost, and a \$3,700 signing bonus on pro rata basis.
- **Year 2:** effective April 1, 2007 a 3.5 per cent general wage increase plus three per cent for comparability to eliminate the significant wage gap with health facilities.
- **Year 3:** effective April 1, 2008 a 3.5 per cent wage increase or the cost of living, whichever is greater, and three per cent for comparability.

In addition, community health unions are proposing the reclassification of a number of positions including LPN supervisors, practical nursing care workers, schedulers, and audiometric technicians.

Meanwhile, representatives of the Health Employers Association of BC also tabled their first compensation offer. It amounted to 1.5 per cent in each of a four...year deal plus a \$3,700 bonus.

-The employers pay package just simply doesnt measure up," says Colleen Fitzpatrick of BCGEU, who is the chief negotiator for the community health unions.

-The bottom line is that the offer doesnt even come close to meeting the projected rate of inflation. And that means community health workers would be worse off financially down the road than they are now."

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