

BULLETIN

Talks break down in community social services: strike vote called

March 31, 2011

The Community Social Services Bargaining Associations last push to achieve a contract ended this week, with talks breaking off Wednesday after 18 months at the bargaining table.

HSAs board of directors has approved a recommendation by HSAs representatives in the multi-union bargaining association to take a strike vote.

-Our bargaining team went to the table with direction from members to negotiate improvements in layoff and bumping language, and improved job security," said HSA spokesperson Josef Rieder. HSA member Lynn Kelsey, a program coordinator at South Okanagan Women in Need Society, and Ron Ohmart represent HSA at the bargaining table.

-Its been 18 months, and weve seen absolutely no appetite from the employer to move on the issues important to our members ... job security and fair work practices," Rieder said.

Community social service workers provide a wide range of assistance to people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds ... including providing child care for families, employment and housing support for people with developmental disabilities, specialized services for immigrants and First Nations families, support for women experiencing violence, people who struggle with substance abuse and addictions, and much more.

-The bargaining association wants to send a strong message to government that the people who deliver these important services in communities across the province deserve respect," HSA President Reid Johnson said.

The breakdown in negotiations comes just as community social services month winds to a close. During March, as many as 50 municipalities across BC signed declarations acknowledging the contributions of community social services workers to healthy communities.

-The bargaining committee has made heroic efforts to negotiate improvements that protect members against job loss, even within the confines of the governments zero mandate. I urge the Community Social Services Employers Association to re-examine the bargaining proposals and support these workers and their clients," Johnson said.

The Community Social Services Bargaining Association bargains on behalf of 15,000 unionized community-based social services workers in BC, including 800 HSA members. The BCGEU is the lead union at the table.

HSA members covered by the CSSBA collective agreement are urged to contact the office by email at contract@hsabc.org to ensure the union has current contact information.

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Click here to see the list of municipalities who support community social services month and acknowledge the contributions of community social services workers:

<http://www.communitysocialservicesmatter.ca/css-month/proclamations>

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