

BULLETIN

Community social services workers overwhelmingly endorse strike action

July 23, 2012

Community social services workers around the province have voted strongly in favour of job action to back their bargaining proposals. Members in General Services have voted 85 per cent in favour of strike action. Members in Community Living Services voted 90 per cent in favour.

-HSA members are joining with members in nine other unions who represent the 15,000 workers in this sector who have given their bargaining committee the strong strike mandate it needs. This vote sends a clear message to the provincial government that these members are prepared to stand up for a fair and reasonable settlement," said HSA president Reid Johnson.

Negotiations broke down in early June between the provincial government, employers and the 10 unions representing B.C.'s 15,000 community social services workers. Community social service workers provide services to men and women, children and families, youth, people with physical or developmental disabilities and First Nations in towns across British Columbia. They are the lowest paid workers in the broad public sector.

Outstanding issues include: wages, benefits, sick leave and reimbursable expenses. The employer is also demanding concessions and wanted to remove improvements negotiated in the last round of bargaining.

-These members are asking for a fair and reasonable deal. One that reflects the important work our members do. Up until now the provincial government has had nothing to offer the caring professionals in community social services. Our members cannot keep falling behind," Johnson said. He thanked the unions representatives at the bargaining table, Sharon Geoghegan, HSA labour relations officer, and Jody Moore, a family counsellor at Cameray Counselling Centre, for the work are doing to represent HSA members at the bargaining table.

The Community Social Services Bargaining Association (CSSBA) is the multi-union bargaining committee for BC's unionized community social service workers. The CSSBA includes ten unions with a combined membership of about 15,000. The BCGEU is the largest union in the community social services sector, representing about two-thirds of workers. CUPE, HEU, HSA are the next largest followed by UFCW, CSWU, USW, SEIU and CLAC.

The provincial government's Community Social Services Employers Association (CSSEA) represents 220 agencies in the sector.

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180 East Columbia
New Westminster, BC V3L 0G7

Website
www.hsabc.org

Telephone 604-517-0994
1-800-663-2017