

BULLETIN

## Health science professionals vote to accept five-year deal

December 23, 2013

Health science professionals have voted 76 per cent in favour of accepting a new five-year contract.

The agreement was reached in advance of the expiry of the current agreement, set to run out on March 31, 2014.

"This agreement meets our shared objectives for stability in the health care system, and recognizes the importance of a commitment to recruitment and retention. Over the course of five years, our members will achieve modest wage increases, and work to continue to deliver quality care to patients. In addition, employers have committed to processes aimed at recruitment and retention of highly skilled and in-demand health science professionals," said Val Avery, president of the Health Sciences Association of BC, which leads the Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association.

Highlights of the tentative agreement include:

- Wage increases totalling 5.5 per cent over five years; with a possibility for improvements dependent on the performance of BC's economy (Economic Stability Dividend).
- A "me-too" clause. If other comparable public sector compensation increases exceed these increases, then the HSPBA collective agreement will be adjusted by an across-the-board percentage increase to match those compensation increases.
- Current benefits provided by the collective agreement will be maintained until April 1, 2016
- A jointly-run trust will be established by April 1, 2016 to allow for joint administration and decision-making about participation in and management of benefits.
- The Pharmacare Tie-In drug benefits coverage program, introduced in the 2012-2014 contract, will be improved to allow for 50% coverage for prescriptions not covered by the Pharmacare formulary. The change is retroactive to Sept. 1, 2013.
- Improved commitment to disability management for staff, ensuring they are supported to return to work successfully after absence due to injury or illness - health care workers experience the highest rate of occupational injury in BC.
- A joint recruitment and retention committee designed to address issues and initiatives to ensure long-term supply of highly skilled health science professionals.

The Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association is led by HSA, and includes other health science professionals represented by BCGEU, CUPE, PEA, and HEU.

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