

BULLETIN

2020 vision

March 17, 2015



HSA REPORT, MARCH 2015

What does your union do well? what do you think HSA needs to improve? what should it look like in 2020?

In a constantly changing world, HSA needs to keep up. The bargaining landscape is more challenging. Members are dealing with more work and less time to be active in the union. External threats consume greater resources, and new technology presents exciting opportunities for education and mobilizing.

Last spring, newly-elected HSA president Val Avery called for a new strategic plan to explore HSA's priorities and options in this changing world.

"Labour relations is changing," said Avery at the union's convention in April 2014. "We need to modernize our services to help our members and our stewards.

"We're looking at technologies to find new ways to improve response times. Disability management is an increasingly complex part of the work we do.

"We must continue to defend our members against the ongoing raids, and we must build on our efforts to raise the profile of HSA with the general public and key decision makers in government.

"That's why when I became president I started work on a five year strategic plan to chart a path forward."

THE PROCESS BEGINS

Led by the board of directors, the strategic planning process began by giving members a chance to provide their thoughts. In September and October, all members were invited to provide in-depth opinions through an online survey. The information provided by members helped shape a series of focus groups attended by stewards and activists and conducted during education workshops in October. Interviews were also conducted to get input from each regional director, the HSA management team, and HSA staff.

To ensure independence, the board of directors contracted with an experienced third-party strategic planning consultant who analyzed and summarized the input from members, activists and stewards. A report based on this work was provided to the board in December, and emailed to all members in January.

- [Read the summary](#)
- [Read the full report](#)

WHAT'S NEXT

A workshop attended by the board and senior staff was held at the end of February and facilitated by the external consultant. The work done there gave further shape to the plan, which is now being finalized and approved by the board of directors. The results will be presented at the May convention.

"I'm very excited about the work done so far," says Avery, who has met with members to hear their ideas at chapter meetings around the province.

"When I announced this process last year, I said the future of our union wasn't up to the people at the front of the room. It's in the hands of all members.

"I'm very pleased that so many members, activists and stewards have answered that call. The plan isn't complete yet, and we don't yet have solutions for all the challenges identified, but it's clear that are moving forward together. As we always have."

HIGHLIGHTS OF MEMBER CONSULTATION

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CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS

The following were agreed by all respondents to be among the greatest challenges and barriers facing HSA at present:

- lack of active member support including insufficient number of stewards
- disengagement, member apathy and lack of mobilization
- public and government opinions of unions
- members' workload, related stress and OHS impacts

STRENGTHS AND CAPABILITIES

The following were agreed by all respondents to be the strengths and assets of HSA; overall, a great sense of pride was expressed in the union's:

- experienced, committed and knowledgeable staff
- dedicated, active, professional members
- infrastructure and processes to support member service
- Constituency Liaison Program
- maintaining integrity in the face of significant challenges over recent years

FUTURE PRIORITIES

The findings from the member consultation point to the following shared priorities for attention:

- engage and mobilize members
- demonstrating HSA's value
- ensuring common direction
- communication and education
- internal communication
- succession planning (for both Board and HSA staff)

DICHOTOMIES

- Some members expressed pride that HSA stands up for progressive social issues and values activism. However, other members advised the union to 'stay focused on members' workplace and contract concerns', and not broader issues beyond the scope of what they see as the union's business.
- Some members cited pride that HSA is perceived as a reasonable, intelligent and moderate voice in the union movement, while others said the union needs to negotiate more aggressively on contracts and "stand up to government."

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