

BULLETIN

The backbone of the union

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By Val Avery, President

Once again, I am honoured to have been elected to serve as your president.

These are challenging times for people who work in health care and community social services. These are challenging times for unions. But we've proven that we can overcome these challenges - when we work together. We may represent over 100 different professions, but those differences don't divide us, they make us stronger. We are diverse, but not divided. Unique, but united.

There is much to be done as we move forward, and we will be guided by a strategic plan presented to convention delegates. The plan sets the course for our work for the next five years in five key areas: services, rights, engagement, relationships and resources. Founded on extensive consultation with members, this strategic plan is your instructions to the Board of Directors, your priorities for your union. The whole plan is posted on the web site, and I encourage all of you to read it.

- [Read HSA's Strategic Plan for 2020](#)

Critical to this plan is the role of stewards. These are the women and men who step forward to volunteer their time, energy, skills and compassion to support their colleagues in the workplace, the leaders who stand up and defend all of us when employers push the limits of our agreements or jeopardize our health and safety.

Stewards are the backbone of the union, and as president, my work is founded on my experience as a steward.

When I got involved in HSA, the possibilities seemed endless. I was encouraged to take training, to learn all about labour relations, to take courses in public speaking, leadership, diversity, and political action. I got involved in different union committees, including the provincial bargaining committee.

With each step, I learned I had more to contribute. I kept opening the doors, which eventually led me to the president's office.

It is my goal to continue to work to make sure the opportunities I had that led me to this leadership position exist for other members starting out in their careers.

So I want to take a moment to encourage you to join me in thanking stewards for their hard work. I'd encourage all members to consider joining their ranks. It's challenging, sure, but take it from me, there's nothing like being part of a team working to make life better for others.

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