

BULLETIN

BCNU excludes HSA RPNs from negotiations for new contract

September 26, 2015

Move to silence RPNs violates Articles of Association ordered by Labour Relations Board

HSA today launched action on behalf of RPNs who are being excluded from BCNU-led negotiations for a new contract. HSA is making application to the Labour Relations Board for an order that bargaining not take place until RPNs are fully represented by HSA negotiators.

HSA RPN members are represented in negotiations by the Nurses Bargaining Association. BCNU is the lead union in the NBA, and holds a 8-2 majority of votes on the NBA negotiating committee. Over the last week, BCNU has used this majority to exclude and silence RPN representatives in direct violation of the Articles of Association that were approved by the BC Labour Relations Board.

HSA is concerned about the following attempts to exclude and silence RPNs at bargaining:

- BCNU failed to provide HSA's RPN representatives with timely notice that bargaining was to commence this week.
- BCNU refused to provide their bargaining proposals by the May 15, 2014 deadline - instead, HSA first saw them only when they were presented to the employer at 1:30 pm on September 21 -- one year and four months after deadline. BCNU bargaining proposals were tabled, and HSA's proposals were not.
- On September 22, HSA negotiators representing RPNs were denied entry to the bargaining session and escorted from the BCNU building by employees of BCNU. Under the Articles of Association approved by the LRB there needs to be at least two unions represented at negotiations to achieve quorum.
- HSA protested this exclusion in a letter to the Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC), and BCNU agreed to let HSA's RPN representatives attend the bargaining session the next day.
- On September 23, HSA negotiators representing RPNs were informed by BCNU that bargaining would take place in part through 27 small committees. BCNU then refused to let HSA participate in any of the committees except two - those focusing on violence and bullying.

"RPNs have specialized skills and years of experience that gives them a unique perspective," said HSA President Val Avery. "An RPN is not just another nurse."

"Last fall BCNU put the safety of RPNs and patients at risk, according to a ruling from the Labour Relations Board. This fall they appear determined to prevent RPNs from having a say in negotiations for their own contract. HSA will continue to stand up for RPNs - for their safety, and for their voice at negotiations."

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