

# THE Report



## 2012 CONVENTION

NDP Opposition Leader Adrian Dix says it's time for a government dedicated to fairness and respect

# Constructive engagement



## **HSA WORKS TO RAISE THE PROFILE OF THE WORK YOU DO.**

That's one of the most important objectives of your union. It's a long-term plan members have asked us to invest in through the advertising campaigns we do every year, and these campaigns are already making a difference.

But the general public is not our only audience. Elected members of BC's Legislative Assembly and their senior staff make decisions that affect your workplace every day. They see our ads, and they see us in the media, but they don't necessarily understand all the ways our members are critical to modern health care and it's important to take our message directly to them.

HSA has been ahead of the curve on government relations for years now, thanks in large part to the Constituency Liaison program which sees dozens of members around the province meet with their local MLA to discuss issues of concern to HSA and its members. Now we're ramping these efforts up, working with professional government relations firms to sharpen our message and identify key decision makers in the government and official opposition.

In April, a number of our constituency liaisons and board members travelled to Victoria to participate in a full day of meetings with cabinet ministers, senior government officials, committee members and critics from the official opposition. It was a very successful effort, and we'll be doing more in the future. You can read more about it in the article on page 12.

While negotiating contract improvements for mem-

**HSA HAS BEEN AHEAD OF THE CURVE ON GOVERNMENT RELATIONS FOR YEARS NOW, THANKS IN LARGE PART TO THE CONSTITUENCY LIAISON PROGRAM.**

bers is our current priority, government members are simply unable to address these concerns away from the negotiating table. Mindful of this, and the need to deliver the same focussed message at dozens of brief meetings over the day, we chose to ask government and opposition members to work with us on reducing wait times for British Columbians by reducing the shortage of health science professionals. Presenting concrete examples and statistics, we were able to make the case that the government could improve health care services and reduce costs by investing in training more health science professionals and working harder to retain the ones currently working in BC.

As with any important work, we can't expect changes overnight, but government and opposition members were genuinely interested in the problems we identified and moved to work with us further. It's just another example of how HSA is using smart and constructive tools to benefit our members and the public. **R**

medical laboratory technologists | physiotherapists | social workers | pharmacists | medical radiation technologists | occupational therapists | psychiatric nurses | respiratory therapists | counsellors | dietitians | health records administrators | diagnostic medical sonographers | cardiology technologists | residential support workers | radiation therapists | speech pathologists | biomedical engineering technologists | nuclear medicine technologists | psychologists | recreation therapists | supported child care consultants | cardiac ultrasound technologists | researchers | analysts | infant development specialists | cytotechnologists | genetic counsellors | diagnostic neurophysiology technologists | general support workers | audiologists | child life specialists | child care support workers | music therapists | clinical perfusionists | cytogenetics technologists | combined laboratory x-ray technologists | polysomnographic technologists | electroencephalography technologists | orthoptists | exercise therapists | psychometrists | administrative support workers | radiotherapy service technologists | rehabilitation support worker | dental hygienists | dosimetrists | educators | orthotists | art therapists | electromyography technologists | cardiopulmonary technologists | orthotics technicians | assessors | orthotic aid fabricators | infection control practitioner | computer services support workers | librarians | remedial gymnasts | diagnostic vascular technologists | electronystagmography technologists | aquatic therapists | massage therapists | prosthetics technicians | anaplastologists | assistive technology consultants

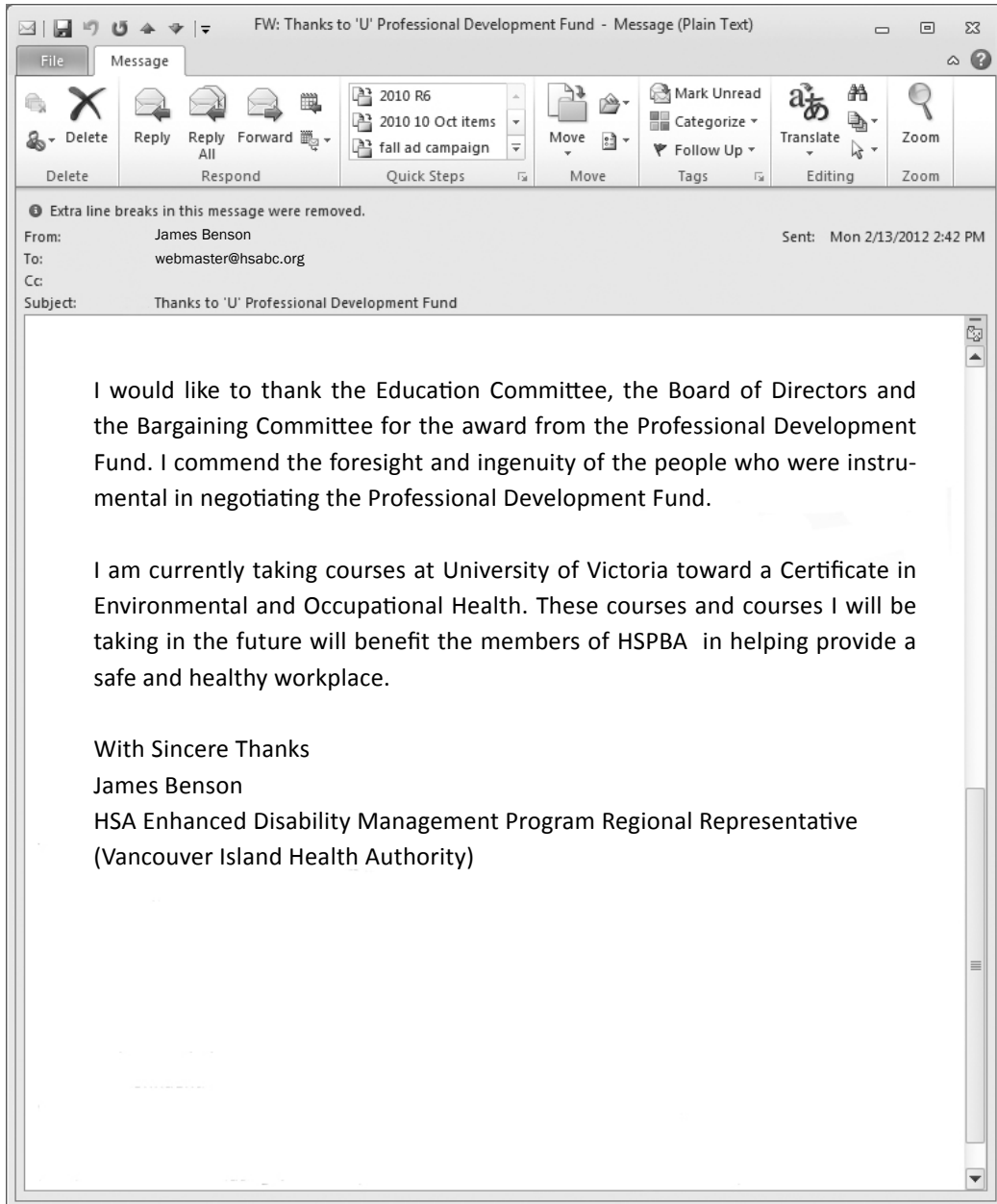


# HEALTH SCIENCES ASSOCIATION

## The union delivering modern health care

medical laboratory technologists | physiotherapists | social workers | pharmacists | medical radiation technologists | occupational therapists | psychiatric nurses | respiratory therapists | counsellors | dietitians | health records administrators | diagnostic medical sonographers | cardiology technologists | residential support workers | radiation therapists | speech pathologists | biomedical engineering technologists | nuclear medicine technologists | psychologists | recreation therapists | supported child care consultants | cardiac ultrasound technologists | researchers | analysts | infant development specialists | cytotechnologists | genetic counsellors | diagnostic neurophysiology technologists | general support workers | audiologists | child life specialists | child care support workers | music therapists | clinical perfusionists | cytogenetics technologists | combined laboratory x-ray technologists | polysomnographic technologists | electroencephalography technologists | orthoptists | exercise therapists | psychometrists | administrative support workers | radiotherapy service technologists | rehabilitation support worker | dental hygienists | dosimetrists | educators | orthotists | art therapists | electromyography technologists | cardiopulmonary technologists | orthotics technicians | assessors | orthotic aid fabricators | infection control practitioner | computer services support workers | librarians | remedial gymnasts | diagnostic vascular technologists | electronystagmography technologists | aquatic therapists | massage therapists | prosthetics technicians | anaplastologists | assistive technology consultants

## FIRST THINGS



Are you taking  
advantage of HSA's

# Professional Development Fund?

While negotiating the terms of the 2010-2012 HSPBA collective agreement, HSA created the Professional Development Fund, providing \$450,000 towards training for all HSPBA members, including members represented by unions other than HSA, over the term of the collective agreement.

After the first round of applications last winter, the fund is not yet spent, and HSA members are again invited to apply for professional development funding for courses to be taken between April 1 and December 31, 2012.

HSA will cover the cost of tuition, fees, books and related expenses to a maximum of \$1,000 for courses taken between April 1, and December, 2012.

**The deadline for applications is October 1, 2012.**

Applications will be reviewed in mid-October, and successful applicants will be notified shortly thereafter.

To learn more about eligibility and download application forms, visit [hsabc.org](http://hsabc.org) and look under education programs.



**HSA's Membership Services Coordinator Dave Martin at a January meeting with pharmacists.**

# A victory for pharmacists

**HSA AND ITS PHARMACIST MEMBERS** have forced the government to back down on a plan to slash salaries for pharmacists by up to 14 per cent.

The plan, announced without warning in January, would have eliminated a market adjustment for pharmacists introduced in 2006 to address chronic issues of recruitment and retention.

HSA immediately met with representatives of the pharmacist members and on January 18 invited all pharmacist members to participate in a province-wide telephone town hall meeting.

HSA set up a web site allowing members and the public to express their concerns directly to members of the government, the opposition and the health authorities and HSA President Reid Johnson met with Health Minister Mike de

Jong to discuss the issue. In March, the Health Employers Association announced they had rescinded plans to cut the market adjustment.

HSA President Reid Johnson applauded the efforts of hospital pharmacists across the province who spoke out.

“The almost 1,200 letters sent through the [pharmacistsmatter.ca](http://pharmacistsmatter.ca) website, along with the efforts of pharmacists who met with MLAs, local health authorities, and who told their stories in the media exerted the pressure we needed for HEABC to reverse its plan for the unilateral wage rollback,” Johnson said.

The market adjustment will be maintained for pharmacists until a new collective agreement is in place.

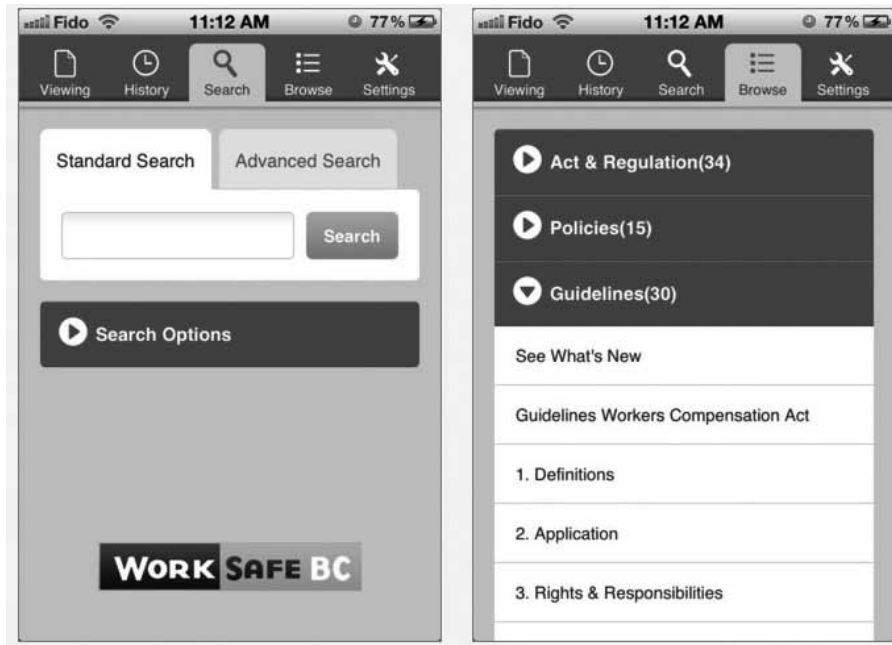
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Now you can carry occupational health and safety regulations in your pocket.

# WorkSafeBC releases smartphone app

Every workplace in BC is governed by Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) regulations – the legal requirements ensuring safety enforced by WorkSafeBC.

The regulations can be complicated, but now WorkSafeBC has released a smartphone app which allows you to search and browse OHS regulations, policies, guidelines, and WCB standards on your smartphone. It even works in basements and other places where you can't get cell service.

You can get the app by tapping

the App Store icon on your iPhone, searching for “worksafebc”, and downloading the app to your phone (it's free).

Once you've download the app, be sure to accept the update when you first open it, as this will load the current version of the OHS Regulation, Policies, Guidelines, and WCB Standards into the app.

## Excellence in BC Health Care Awards

The Excellence in BC Health Care Awards recognize outstanding health care employees and reward innovation and best practices within BC's publicly funded health care providers.

Presented by the Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC), the awards celebrate the successes in our province's health care community and recognize those who are often too busy to stop and appreciate their accomplishments. Some awards are for projects that are improving health care delivery in BC and some are for individual health employees who are shining stars and inspirations to those around them. All employees of HEABC members are eligible for nomination, and several HSA members have been recognized in recent years.

### AWARDS LUNCHEON TICKETS

The 2012 awards luncheon will be on Monday, June 25 at the Pan Pacific Hotel. Tickets are available for \$80 (plus HST) each from Joyce Lee (604.714.2264 or JoyceL@heabc.bc.ca).





**HSA President Reid Johnson presented representatives of Run for the Cure with a cheque for \$86,281 at the April convention. HSA members raised a record-breaking \$51,281 and HSA annual corporate donation contributed a further \$35,000.**

## Oops: *Report* features incorrect information about tax deduction for LTD premiums paid

An article in the February issue of *The Report* contained incomplete information about tax deductions.

The potential for deducting for long-term disability premiums only applies if you are on an accepted LTD claim. A member who is on an accepted LTD claim may be able to claim on their

tax returns for LTD premiums they have previously paid.

Whether they are eligible to do so, and how far back they can claim, is something HSA recommends you discuss with a financial or tax professional.

## Employees working July 2 get stat pay

This year, July 1 falls on a Sunday. According to the federal Holidays Act, this means the legal statutory holiday is July 2. For 2012, members working July 2 will receive stat pay – not those working July 1.

Contact your steward if you have questions. You can find a list of stewards on your union bulletin board or at [hsabc.org](http://hsabc.org).

# Negotiating your next contract

With contract negotiations continuing at a number of tables in the public sector – from health care to direct government service – members are encouraged to visit [hsabc.org](http://hsabc.org) for more up to date information about progress at the bargaining table.

## HEALTH SCIENCE PROFESSIONALS BARGAINING ASSOCIATION

**Lead union:** HSA

**Number of HSA members:** 14,300

**Contract expiry:** March 31, 2012

Bargaining at the HSPBA table continues to make slow but steady progress, says Chief Negotiator Jeanne Meyers.

“At the outset of bargaining, we said HSA is committed to the process, but that if we didn’t see signs from employers that there was an appetite for meaningful discussion about contract issues important to health science professionals, we would not have a lot of patience for the process,” Meyers said.

“I am optimistic that the work being done at the bargaining table is productive, albeit slow, and we are working on a number of long-standing issues that it is in members’ interest to resolve,” she said.

Areas in which detailed and promising discussions are continuing are

the work of the insufficient off-duty hours committee, and a group working on the Enhanced Disability Management Program.

Negotiators are also making progress on an improved and faster arbitration process designed to speed up resolution of disputes.

“The pace is slow, but the discussions are consistent with the priorities set by the bargaining proposal conference, which called for improvements to address professional interests, and fair and reasonable recognition of the value of health science professionals in the modern health care team,” said HSA bargaining committee chair Val Avery.

Bargaining is set to resume at the end of June.

## NURSES BARGAINING ASSOCIATION

**Lead union:** BCNU

**Number of HSA members:** 1100

**Contract expiry:** March 31, 2012

Negotiations resumed in May. Issues now being debated include:

**Health authority-wide seniority.** This will improve nurses’ mobility and maximize the value of their seniority rights. Both the unions and the employers proposed this concept, and it’s close to resolution.

**Availability and scheduling of casual employees.** The health authorities are demanding that casual nurses guarantee they will work a minimum number of hours a year. To address serious workload problems, the unions are proposing that the contract legally require employers to backfill vacancies when nurses are off on leave from a scheduled shift. Such a requirement also would provide better opportunities for nurses to get time off, including union leave.

AS THIS ISSUE GOES TO PRESS, HSA NEGOTIATORS ARE WORKING HARD TO MAKE GAINS FOR YOU. THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO INSIST ON A "CO-OPERATIVE GAINS" MANDATE THAT MEANS ANY IMPROVEMENT MUST BE PAID FOR WITHIN FROM SAVINGS WITHIN THE SYSTEM.

**VISIT HSABC.ORG FOR UPDATES.**

### **COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES BARGAINING ASSOCIATION**

**Lead union:** BCGEU  
**Number of HSA members:** 700  
**Contract expiry:** March 31, 2012

The bargaining committee is continuing to make the case for a fair and reasonable deal at the bargaining table, including a wage increase. The committee is also pushing back on concessionary demands by the employer.

The multi-union bargaining committee decided to hold off presenting monetary proposals to the employer until health and welfare benefits options have been thoroughly examined. The committee is in the process of meeting with the main benefit carriers to discuss improved health and welfare benefit options for workers in the sector.

### **COMMUNITY BARGAINING ASSOCIATION**

**Lead union:** BCGEU  
**Number of HSA members:** 600  
**Contract expiry:** March 31, 2012

After meeting for three weeks during April, the CBA and HEABC agreed to take a three week break to review proposals and conduct additional research on the outstanding issues. Talks restarted on May 28 and are scheduled to continue for three weeks.

The primary non-monetary issues remaining are scheduling, grievance and arbitration procedures, health and safety, anti-bullying and allowances. Benefits and compensation will be discussed once the non-monetary items are dealt with.

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO**

#### **UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFO**

It's important for HSA to be able to contact you. Please make sure your contact information is current.

- Log in on HSA's website at <http://www.hsabc.org/members/login.php>

You can view or update the contact information we have on file for you and sign up to receive news bulletins directly to your email inbox. You can also email your info to [memberlist@hsabc.org](mailto:memberlist@hsabc.org).

#### **GET THE LATEST INFO ON LINE**

For regular bargaining updates:

- check [hsabc.org](http://hsabc.org)
- follow us on Twitter @hsabc
- visit us on Facebook at [facebook.com/HSABC](https://www.facebook.com/HSABC)



Members of the Constituency Liaison program gather on the steps of the Legislature before meetings; (L-R) Feriba Rasool, Heather Sapergia, Wendy Cseke, Kimball Finigan, Trina Nguyen, Anita Bardal, Jeanne Meyers, Allen Peters, Mary-Lou Icton, Rachel Tutte.

# Direct access

HSA'S GOVERNMENT RELATIONS PROGRAM HELPS RAISE PROFILE, ADDRESS SHORTAGES

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“THIS WAS AN IMPORTANT STEP IN THE UNION’S ONGOING EFFORTS TO RAISE HSA’S PROFILE IN VICTORIA AND TO BUILD POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE DECISIONS THAT AFFECT OUR MEMBERS, AND THE PATIENTS AND CLIENTS THEY SERVE,”

**HSA MEMBERS TOOK TO THE HALLS** of power recently in a whirlwind series of meetings with cabinet ministers, the leader of the opposition, MLAs on both sides of the House, as well as influential ministry and political staff.

On Monday April 30 a group of 19 HSA members from around the province, including president Reid Johnson, several regional directors and constituency liaisons, spent the day meeting in small groups with key decision makers in the areas of health care, community social services, finance, labour, job creation and advanced education.

The main message from HSA was that BC has serious shortages in several health science professions that are contributing to longer wait lists and increased health care costs. HSA representatives outlined the need for more training and clinical practicum spaces, as well as for competitive wages and benefits to be able to recruit and retain these scarce professionals.

Trevor Whyte, a constituency liaison and respiratory therapist from Surrey Memorial Hospital, was struck by how effective it was for members to share with the MLAs their personal stories as front-line health care professionals. “It was useful to provide the MLAs with the

data on shortages and training spaces, but the stories we told made it real for them, and is something that will stick with them,” said Whyte.

Several HSA members were also introduced by their MLAs in the Legislature, prior to the afternoon session. Heather Sapergia, Region 10 Director and a constituency liaison, felt this was invaluable. “MLAs introduced our representatives as members of their particular profession and the Health Sciences Association, ensuring that all MLAs in the Legislature learned something about the range of professions represented by HSA,” said Sapergia. “This was a great way to raise the profile of HSA and our professions.”

Later in the afternoon, several HSA representatives met with nine MLAs from the Select Standing Committee on Health. This committee is currently looking at how to keep our public health care system sustainable as BC’s population ages. HSA representatives made sure the committee members heard the many ways that health science professionals help promote health and prevent injury and illness in the elderly, as well as the message that more of these professionals are needed to keep our health care system sustainable.

In the evening, HSA hosted a reception for MLAs and their staff, giv-

ing HSA representatives the opportunity to chat informally with more than 50 MLAs from both parties.

Feriba Rasool, a constituency liaison and cardiology technologist at Richmond Hospital, made good use of this reception to line up future meetings with some of the MLAs in her area. “Meeting like this face-to-face made the MLAs seem much more approachable,” said Rasool. “I hope to work with other constituency liaisons at Richmond Hospital to arrange a tour for these MLAs to come and see what HSA members do at the hospital.”

HSA members who participated in the day of meetings, including president Reid Johnson, were unanimous that HSA’s first government relations day was an unqualified success. “This was an important step in the union’s ongoing efforts to raise HSA’s profile in Victoria and to build positive relationships with the people who make decisions that affect our members, and the patients and clients they serve,” said Johnson. “HSA members are tremendous spokespersons for their professions and their patients, so bringing them face-to-face with these decision makers is one of the most effective ways to promote the interests of our members and our patients.”



**Heather Sapergia, laboratory technologist and Director for Region 10, and HSA President Reid Johnson presented the 2012 David Bland Award to Tonia Cherris, who accepted on behalf of the co-recipient Tasha Johnson. Both are registered psychiatric nurses working at Royal Jubilee Hospital.**

# 2012 Convention

**DELEGATES ATTENDING HSA'S 41ST ANNUAL CONVENTION** rejected proposals to switch to a biennial convention, discussed the challenges of the current bargaining climate and debated solutions to a long-standing problem with a long-term disability trust just over 200 members.

“Every day you go to work to serve others, to make a difference,” said President Reid Johnson during a report that touched on the HSA’s drive to achieve fairness for patients by negotiating an agreement that delivers

reasonable improvements for members. “Whether it’s a cancer patient, a woman in crisis, a child with developmental disabilities, a young man learning how to care for himself after a car accident; they are the reasons we go to work. You have chosen professions that matter.”

Compassion for the people we serve begins with respect for the professionals who deliver these services, Johnson said.

“Respect for the work we do in our work lives. Respect

PHOTOS: DAVID BIBBER



**Trevor Whyte, respiratory therapist at Surrey Memorial Hospital.**

for the people we serve every day, and respect for the work we do for our peers and our colleagues as HSA stewards and activists.”

Johnson’s report outlined ongoing advertising, direct lobbying of the government, and outreach to professional associations and educators as part of HSA’s long-term goal of raising profile and clout for members, along with the addition of more specialized staff to deal with the growing complexity of labour relations and growing

demand for member servicing. Johnson also announced that on top of additional labour relations expertise HSA is hiring additional staff to boost education, helping stewards develop the tools and skills to better serve members and represent HSA in communities.

“It’s no secret that the systems we work in are under attack,” said Johnson. “Not a day goes by that somewhere in the media public services, or the work of people delivering those public services, are criticised or under-



“HSA’s way of doing things is slightly different than other unions I have found. It’s much more of a collaborative approach. It’s not as much of a dictatorship or a get-out-there-and-make-a-scene kind of union.”

**MIKE TRELENBERG**, Operations manager for Share Food Bank, Port Moody



**Donnalynn Soepboer, respiratory therapist at Royal Columbian Hospital and Michele Mackenzie, respiratory therapist at Eagle Ridge Hospital.**

mined.” HSA works to push back against these attacks through continued support of the BC Health Coalition and through affiliation with the BC Federation of Labour and the National Union of Public and General Employees.

A number of chapters submitted resolutions proposing that HSA follow the lead of other major unions by holding conventions every second year, taking advantage of communications technologies to make sure members

are better informed than ever while diverting resources into outreach strategies like regional conferences allowing more participation among members who cannot normally attend convention. The proposed changes, which would have required a two-thirds majority to pass, were defeated by delegates, many suggesting that convention plays a important role as a place for activists to exchange ideas and that many matters before convention simply cannot wait two years.

“This convention has been kind of interesting. I have never really been pro-union. I think if nothing else just being able to talk to other people in each different sector is helpful. We’re kind of educating each other here at the convention because we don’t all know what the other profession does, so that’s a big piece of the experience.”

**CRAIG CURTIS**, pharmacist, Nanaimo







**Shirley Kavanagh, laboratory technologist at Mission Memorial Hospital with Anne Davis, Director for Region 1 and program coordinator with Comox Valley Transition Society.**

Delegates also heard a report on a long-term disability trust facing financial difficulties. The complexities of the problem, going back several decades, made for an emotional discussion. For more on this, see the story on page 19.

HSA played host to several guest speakers, including Jim Sinclair, President of the BC Federation of Labour, Amber Hockin, Regional Director for the Canadian Labour Congress and Larry Brown, Secretary-Treasurer

for the National union of Public and General Employees. Adrian Dix, leader of the Opposition New Democrats and former health critic, delivered a keynote speech addressing his thoughts on potentially forming the next government of BC and managing the health care system to better serve patients while respecting health science professionals. For more about his speech, read the story on page 20.

The 2012 David Bland Award was presented to reg-



"I just feel for our profession that representation in the union is not as strong as it should be. And in our little hospital there is sort of a family of people working there, it's very friendly and easy going and not many people stand up for themselves in the union. But I think it's very important for us to get involved because the union is doing a lot of great stuff for its members."

**HOLLY ZHANG, ultrasound technologist, Vancouver**



**Nancy Banks, laboratory technologist at Kootenay Lake Hospital.**

istered psychiatric nurses Tasha Johnson and Tonia Cherris, on behalf of all registered psychiatric nurses at the Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit at Royal Jubilee Hospital.

“When the Vancouver Island Health Authority constructed a new patient care centre they were under the illusion that a new building would take care of the risk of violence in the new Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit,” said Reid Johnson. “The employees knew otherwise.

They knew that the unit was ill-conceived with respect to its layout, lack of safety protections, communications, and policies and procedures. They knew old unworkable processes were simply being moved to a new building.”

Tasha Johnson spearheaded a letter-writing campaign to the health authority’s CEO, who responded by participating in a tour and agreeing to delay construction for

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PHOTO: ADRIENNE SILNICKI

“Pharmacists feel supported by other disciplines here at convention and when the topic of the pharmacist wage rollback is brought up there is a really positive response to what we as pharmacists have done and how the HSA handled the issue.”

**RUBY SANGHA**, pharmacist, Vancouver



# Difficult choices for disability plan

One of the most difficult and emotional debates at this year's Annual Convention revolved around a decision by HSA's union-trusteed Long Term Disability Plan to transition members eligible for early retirement to the Municipal Pension Plan, and to reduce benefits paid to remaining claimants. While the decision was a difficult one, the Trustees felt it was the only option available to ensure the viability of the Plans, which had suffered from the financial meltdown in 2008, and exacerbated by a 2006 actuarial error.

HSA delegates to convention were asked to adopt an extraordinary resolution calling for the union to ask members if they would consider an increase in the amount of money members pay in union dues to maintain those members on current disability compensation levels. The motion was referred to the union's board of directors to consider the financial state of the union-trusteed Long Term Disability plan that funds more than 200 members on long term disability, and the effect of a decision by plan trustees to remove members eligible for early retirement and to reduce benefits paid to remaining claimants.

Long-term disability (LTD) coverage is designed to provide a source of income should an employee become disabled outside of a work injury or illness. Notwithstanding the debate at convention and direction to the board to examine the issue, the changes to the plan will go into effect July 1, 2012.

The LTD plans in question are closed plans, which means that that no premiums are being paid into the plans. These plans were closed in 2006, when LTD

coverage for HSA members moved from a union-run and 100 per cent member-funded plan, to a shared plan, with members paying 30 per cent of the premiums, and employers paying 70 per cent. A majority of HSA members are covered by the latter plan, which is not affected by the changes for the closed trusts.

Several members receiving LTD benefits under the closed plans made passionate presentations to convention delegates about the effect the changes to the LTD rules will have on them, and asked convention delegates to consider ways for the union to support them.

After some debate, the resolution was referred to the Board of Directors with direction to ensure members are educated about the issue. The Board of Directors is scheduled to consider the referred resolution at its next board meeting in June.

It is estimated that an immediate injection of approximately \$25 million may be required. The union's board of directors is expected to receive an analysis in June of the implications that would have on the amount of union dues paid by members.



**After delivering his speech to delegates, Dix stops to chat with delegate Doug Brydle, a biomedical engineering technologist at Surrey Memorial Hospital.**

# Adrian Dix: treat health care workers with respect

PHOTO: JARED GNAM

“OUR HEALTH CARE WORKERS AT EVERY LEVEL PERFORMED IN A MORE PRODUCTIVE WAY THAN ALMOST ANY OTHER HEALTH CARE WORKERS IN NORTH AMERICA. THEY DELIVER ABSOLUTELY OUTSTANDING OUTCOMES AND THEY HAVE NOT BEEN TREATED WITH RESPECT.”

**NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY LEADER ADRIAN DIX** told HSA delegates his party is committed to building a stronger provincial health care system in order to build prosperity in British Columbia.

“We have to respond to the challenges of the public health care system in the 21st century that’s under attack from Ottawa and under attack from private interest and this current government in our province,” said Dix to a ballroom of several hundred HSA delegates from across B.C.

The former health critic said the B.C. Liberal government has received a six per cent increase in federal grants from Health Canada annually over the last 10 years, but squandered the chance to improve health services in this time.

This should have been a period for innovation in health care, said Dix, but instead the B.C. Liberals have invested in costly private-public partnerships and dumped \$450 million into the Abbotsford Regional Hospital, without increasing the number of acute-care beds in the province.

Meanwhile, problems such as soaring prescription drug prices and long wait times for MRIs and other diagnostic services have continued to plague British Columbians over the last decade, said Dix, who pointed out that Alberta budgets 24 per cent more on health care per person than in B.C.

“We can do better than this and we will have to because

the current Liberal government in British Columbia places the support of Mr. Harper for their provincial political goals before the public health care system.”

He added the B.C. Liberals have supported cuts in federal transfer payments in 2013 to 2014, which will present more challenges to maintain services and keep bringing people into the health care system to meet future demands.

For Dix, having a strong public health care system is necessary to ensure a prosperous economy and investment in the province.

“One of the reasons our economy is more efficient than the United States, one of the reasons this is a better place to invest than the United States is that we have public health care in Canada,” he said.

Dix, whose party was coming off two big by-election wins the night before, praised the efforts of HSA members and other health care professionals in the province for their commitment in maintaining a high level of health services despite cuts.

“Our health care workers at every level perform in a more productive way than almost any other health care workers in North America,” he said. “They deliver absolutely outstanding outcomes and they have not been treated with respect.”

Premier Christy Clark was also invited to address the convention but she declined the invitation. **R**



**The vendor booth for Little Travellers continues to be popular among delegates. Headed by HSA addictions counsellor Joanne Schwartz, sales of jewellery and figures made by women in Africa contribute to AIDS relief.**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

nine months while concerns were addressed. As an HSA member who had never previously been involved in any mobilization Tasha Johnson became a spokesperson and the conscience of the initiative, while Tonia Cherris took on the unenviable task of holding the employer’s feet to fire when the predictable ‘quick fix’ or ‘hurry up’ attitude was presented. Tonia’s work ensured that the bureaucra-

cy did not take over this project.

“The tireless work and very long hours spent by these two courageous women on behalf their coworkers changed the way this employer did business,” said Reid Johnson. “Without their efforts, this site would undoubtedly still be, as titled by WCB, the most dangerous in BC.” **R**

“Coming here as a director, we’ve had to find ways to increase servicing, which means we need more staff, more labour relations officers. Our members want HSA to have a bigger profile in the province so that the public knows more who we are and what we do.”

**ANITA BARDAL**, Director, Region 6, radiation technologist, Vancouver



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Municipal  
Pension Plan

Plan to attend and learn  
more about ***YOUR***  
pension plan.

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11**

Victoria Conference Centre  
720 Douglas Street  
Victoria, BC

Starting at 9:30 a.m

Also available by webcast at  
[mpp.pensionsbc.ca](http://mpp.pensionsbc.ca)

## NEED HELP?

HSA's experts are available to assist

1. Contact your union steward first regarding workplace concerns. At most facilities, a list of your stewards is posted on your union bulletin board. You can also find your steward's contact info on HSA's website – just click "contact" then "find your steward".
2. For regional labour relations issues, or if your steward can't help, contact the HSA office and speak to a labour relations officer: toll free 1.800.663.2017, or 604.439.0994 in the Lower Mainland.
3. For all provincial, national, or union policy issues, contact your elected regional director (listed on the back cover).

# Every Shift Counts!



THE work you do now contributes to your future retirement income from the Municipal Pension Plan.

SHIFT schedules can impact your pension.

**REVIEW** your *Member's Benefit Statement* when it arrives in June to confirm you are being credited for all the time you have earned.



**Visit** [everyshiftcounts.pensionsbc.ca](http://everyshiftcounts.pensionsbc.ca)

Municipal  
Pension Plan

# HSA scholarship winners for 2012

**HSA PROVIDES MEMBERS AND THEIR CHILDREN** with several scholarships and bursaries for education. Scholarships are adjudicated by the union's education committee. Members of the 2012/13 education committee are:

- Bruce MacDonald (Chair, Director Region 3)
- Anita Bardal (Director Region 6)
- Nadine Soukoreff (Member at Large Region 4)
- Jim Christensen (Member at Large Region 8)
- Breahn Coulson (Member at Large Region 7)
- Leila Lolua (staff)

For more information about the work of this committee, contact Leila Lolua at 604-439-0994 or toll-free 1-800-663-2017.

Applications for 2013 will be accepted beginning January 2013. See [hsabc.org](http://hsabc.org) for more information.

## SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

**David Chin** - Family of Anne Chin, physiotherapist, Fraser Valley Child Development Centre

**Michael Chin** - Family of Anne Chin, physiotherapist, Fraser Valley Child Development Centre

**Lucas Dellabough** - Family of Leanne Dellabough, occupational therapist, Queen Alexandra Centre

**Madelaine Hochu Sommers** - Family of Joanne Hochu, child life specialist at BC Children's Hospital

**Corrie Irwin** - Respiratory therapist, Vancouver General Hospital

**David Landells** - Family of D'Arcy Wingrove, physiotherapist, Queen Alexandra Centre

**Grace McConnell** - Family of Dina McConnell, psychologist, Children's Hospital

**Danielle McLean** - Family of Dawn McLean, radiation therapist, BC Cancer Agency - Victoria Island Cancer Centre

**Ryan Stratychuk** - Family of Cindy Stratychuk, medical radiation technologist, Kelowna General Hospital

**Zhenjia Zhu** - Family of Nigel Zhu, medical lab technologist, Vancouver General Hospital

**First Runner-Up: Amanda Ames** - Family of Bob Ames, biomedical engineering technologist, Kelowna General Hospital

**Second Runner-Up: Gloria Jackson** - Behavioural consultant, Campbell River Family Services

**Third Runner-Up: Danielle Parish** - Family of Britt Parish, biomedical engineering technologist, Children and Women's Hospital

## FULL-TIME BURSARY AWARDS

**Amber Bacon-Clark** - Family of Donna Bacon, administrative assistant, Comox Valley Child Development Centre

**Christina Chu** - Biostatistical Analyst, BC Cancer Agency - Vancouver Cancer Centre

**Katherine Conrad** - Family of Patricia Conrad, occupational therapist, Chilliwack General Hospital

**Shaun Cormier** - Family of Jacqueline Cormier, early childhood educator, Child Development Centre of Prince George

**Melissa Eden** - Family of Helene Eden, diagnostic medical sonographer, Kelowna General Hospital

**Jessica Evans** - Children's counsellor, Victoria Women's Transition House



**Katia Fawaz** - Family of Elizabeth Fawaz, medical supply clerk, North Shore Community Health Services

**Maria Ganger** - Family of Clare Ganger, family services worker, Centre for Child Development

**Jennifer Glover** - Family of Marlene Glover, medical lab technologist, Royal Inland Hospital

**Jordan Groesch** - Family of Kimberly Groesch, medical radiation technologist, Kelowna General Hospital

**Wendy Kirkpatrick** - Cardiology technologist, Nanaimo Regional General Hospital

**Christine Lukac** - Family of Beatrice Lukac, community mental health worker, Vancouver Community Mental Health Services

**Amanda McKay** - Family of Katherine McKay, occupational therapist, Kelowna General Hospital

**Sana Mohammed** - Behaviour interventionist, North Okanagan Neurological Association

**Chris Patterson** - Family of Connie Patterson, dietitian, Kelowna General Hospital

**Britney Patten** - Family of Andrew Patten, cardiology technologist, Kelowna General Hospital

**Meegan Simpson-Cooke** - Activity worker, Victoria Women's Transition House

**Miranda Strahl** - Family of David Stankiewicz, respiratory therapist, Vernon Jubilee Hospital

**Jordan Torok** - Family of Sherrie Torok, dietitian, Chilliwach General Hospital

**Madeleine Symonds** - Family of Lorin Jane Medley, counsellor, Comox Valley Transition Society

**Emma Twidale** - Crisis intervention support worker, Comox Valley Child Development Centre

**First Runner-Up: Riley Crape** - Family of Darcie Crape, medical radiation technologist, Campbell River Hospital

**Second Runner-Up: Sunny Chen** - Family of Jessie Li, health records administrator, Langley Memorial Hospital

**Third Runner-Up: Ashley Atkinson** - Family of Deborah Atkinson, cardiology technologist, Richmond Hospital

**Fourth Runner-Up: Rhys Powell** - Family of Dawn Powell, physiotherapist, Kootenay Lake Hospital

#### **PART-TIME BURSARY AWARDS**

**Ada Leung** - medical lab technologist, Lions Gate Hospital

**Pamela Chiu** - medical radiation technologist, Surrey Memorial/St. Paul's/Richmond Hospitals

#### **ABORIGINAL BURSARY AWARDS**

Dorothy van Allen

Nicole Williams

Sheridan Martin (first runner-up)

April Mercereau (second runner-up)

Paul Gully (third runner-up)

Dana Tough (fourth runner-up)

Individuals named as runner-up will receive a cash award should award-winners be unable to collect.

# Defined benefit pensions are worth defending

**I am confused by all the controversy surrounding public sector defined benefit pensions. What is the fuss about, and how does it affect my pension as a 45-year old?**

Pensions are in the news today like never before with the financial meltdown contributing to general concerns over retirement security the world over. And never before have so many been poised to retire as the baby boom generation reaches retirement age. Add to that the federal government announcing changes to Old Age Security, and you have the attention of millions of Canadians wondering about their retirement.

In this environment, attention will be focused on defined benefit pension plans as they may seem out of step with private pension schemes like individual Retirement Savings Plans or occupational plans that are designed on the defined contribution model. These pension arrangements are not as secure as defined benefit pension plans, so comparisons will be made particularly at a time when financial markets are not generating the rates of return needed to build adequate retirement security.

Defined benefit pension plans have the ability to ride out market fluctuations and take advantage of their size to create efficiencies in both the administration of the pension plan and the costs associated with creating investment wealth. No other pension model is as efficient as a defined benefit pension plan, and they should be maintained on that basis alone. The private sector always talks about market efficiency, so you'd think they would be in favour of defined benefit pension plans. Sadly, their leadership think otherwise.

**MAKE SURE YOU ARE READY TO REACT IF SOMEONE TELLS YOU THAT DEFINED BENEFIT PENSION PLANS ARE UNAFFORDABLE OR UNSUSTAINABLE. IT'S JUST NOT TRUE.**

Luckily, most Canadians have access to a defined benefit pension plan. It's called the Canada Pension Plan and is a world leader in pension design and wealth creation on behalf of millions of working Canadians. The CPP should be expanded to improve retirement security in Canada, but that doesn't take away from the fact that it is an extremely valuable and socially significant retirement program.

For a person in a defined benefit pension plan, my advice is to not take it for granted. You have many years before retirement, so keep an eye on your politicians. Make sure you are ready to react if someone tells you that defined benefit pension plans are unaffordable or unsustainable. It's just not true.

**Are there other benefits I should know about associated with defined benefit pension plans?**

There are many other advantages of defined benefit pension plans. For one, they invest in our communities, providing jobs and economic activity, and make

**R**

Do you have questions for HSA's pensions & benefits advocate?  
Contact Dennis Blatchford at [dblatchford@hsabc.org](mailto:dblatchford@hsabc.org)

investments for the long haul bringing stability to the provincial economy. Retirees under these plans have secure incomes that bolster local economies through purchases of a range of goods and services supporting local employment and businesses. An adequate and secure retirement also means less pressure on provincial public security programs and services. This has a positive influence on public finances, and brings stability to local communities through things like home ownership. Defined benefit pension plans also have a stabilizing effect on the job market. The ability to attract and retain a qualified and stable workforce has a positive influence on labour markets; reducing turn-over and training costs.

**This is all very interesting. Is there a way I can get more involved?**

Yes. Your Municipal Pension Plan holds an annual general meeting usually in the Lower Mainland. This year it will be held in Victoria on October 11th at the Victoria Conference Centre. The AGM is open to all plan members. I encourage you to come out and find out more about your pension plan and the people who run it. It would be a valuable investment in your future. **R**

## CURRENT DISPUTES

For more information and updates, please check the BC Federation of Labour web site at: [bcfed.com](http://bcfed.com).

### United Steelworkers, Local 2009 - VS - Gillwood Manufacturing, Chilliwack

Major Issues: Concessions, job security, wages, work hours. Locked out March 2012

### BC Teacher's Federation - VS - BC Public Schools Employers' Association

Major Issues: Benefits, wages  
Commenced: September 2011

### Teamsters, Local 31 - VS - The Great Canadian Railtour Company (operating as Rocky Mountaineer Vacations)

Major Issues: Seniority, wages, work hours  
Locked out June 21, 2011

### Construction and Specialized Workers' Union, Local 1611 - VS - Wescon Enterprises Ltd. (Trivern) (Armstrong)

Major Issues: Seniority, Benefits, Concessions  
Commenced: July 25, 2001

### MOVING?

Your employer does not send us address changes. We depend on you to let us know.

#### RETURN TO:

Health Sciences Association of BC  
300 - 5118 Joyce St.  
Vancouver, BC  
V5R 4H1

#### OR EMAIL:

[memberlist@hsabc.org](mailto:memberlist@hsabc.org)

MEMBER # (AT TOP LEFT OF MAILING LABEL)

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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GIVEN NAMES

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NEW HOME ADDRESS

CITY

PROVINCE

POSTAL CODE

HOME TEL. ( )

WORK TEL. & LOCAL ( )

HSA is committed to using the personal information we collect in accordance with applicable privacy legislation. By completing this form, you are consenting to have HSA use the submitted information for the purposes of conducting our representational duties as a union, and in providing services to our members. For further information, please contact HSA's privacy officer. The full HSA privacy policy is available online at [www.hsabc.org](http://www.hsabc.org).

# Board election results for 2012

**IN MAY, MEMBERS OF HSA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS** elected Val Avery as the union's vice-president, and Janice Morrison as secretary treasurer. HSA's Board of Directors represents each of the 10 regions across BC. Directors are elected by members for a two-year term. The results of the elections, held in early 2012, are as follows:

## **REGION 2 - VAL AVERY**

Serving her third term on the Board, Val is a physiotherapist at the Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria and has serviced three consecutive terms as HSA's Vice-President. Val currently chairs the Presidential Issues Committee and Resolutions Committee for HSA's convention. She also sits as HSA's representative on the board of the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation (BC-Yukon Division). Val also co-chairs the Bargaining Committee that is currently negotiating a new collective agreement for the Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association.

## **REGION 4 - BRENDAN SHIELDS**

Serving his second term on the Board, Brendan is a music therapist who has worked in a variety of health care settings in Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health. He currently works, and serves as a steward, at Richmond Hospital. Brendan sits on HSA's Finance Committee and Presidential Issues Committee (PIC). He also serves as a constituency liaison, and is an alternate on the bargaining committee for the upcoming round of collective bargaining for the Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association.

## **REGION 6 - ANITA BARDAL**

Serving her second term on the Board, Anita works as a medical radiation technologist at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver, where she continues to serve as a steward. Anita currently chairs HSA's Run for the Cure Committee and serves on the Education Committee and Women's Committee. She is also a constituency liaison.

## **REGION 8 - ALLEN PETERS**

Serving his second term on the Board, Allen is a medical imaging technologist at Nicola Valley General Hospital in Merritt, where he continues to serve as an occupational health and safety steward. Allen was first elected to the Board in a by-election in July, 2011. He previously served as a member-at-large for Region 8 for several years, and during that time participated in several HSA committees including Education, Occupational Health and Safety, Resolutions and Political Action. Allen is a recipient of the David Bland Award for his extensive work in occupational health and safety. He also serves as a constituency liaison.

## **REGION 10 - HEATHER SAPERGIA**

Serving her second term on the Board, Heather works as a medical laboratory technologist at the University Hospital of Northern BC where she continues to serve as an assistant chief steward. She currently chairs the Occupational Health and Safety Committee, and sits on the Constitutional and Organizational Policy Committee and the Resolutions Committee. Heather also represents HSA on the executive of the North Central Labour Council, is an active HSA Constituency Liaison, and works with the BC Health Coalition. **R**



## We're adding expertise to meet your changing needs

**AS REPORTED AT THE APRIL CONVENTION**, activity in the labour relations and legal services department of HSA continues to expand, as we respond to and attempt to anticipate and adjust to an ever-changing landscape in the delivery of public services in British Columbia.

Consolidations in the health care sector over the past year have transferring thousands of members from one employer to another, affecting HSA's long-standing model of facility-based servicing. Long-serving stewards have been told by their employers that they can no longer represent members who work at their chapters unless they are employed by the same employer as the steward. We are working to address these issues at two levels: on the ground by helping stewards develop structures that work to best represent all members, and at the bargaining table.

Over the past several months, HSA has also focused on developing specialized staff to ensure the highest quality representation for members in an increasingly complex labour relations environment, making internal changes to ensure members' concerns and disputes are being handled by in-house specialists in a timely manner.

Classifications disputes are now being supported by the classifications department from the initiation of the grievance, rather than at or after the Stage 3 grievance meeting. In the past, stewards were counted on to support members to that stage, but as the grievances increase in complexity, the burden is getting too heavy for our stewards – who represent members in a volunteer capacity.

We have also consolidated HSA staff's expertise in disability related matters, including the ever-growing demands for duty to accommodate arrangements. These disability issues are being handled at the earliest stages by specialists

in the field. The changes are designed to improve service delivery on time- and labour-intensive labour relations matters, freeing up Labour Relations Officers to support members and stewards at assigned work sites.

These increased resources to support members have been further supplemented this year to ensure that member services continue to be delivered while HSA represents members at four separate sets of collective bargaining negotiations. In accordance with direction from the union's convention delegates, staff who are supporting negotiations at the Health Science Professionals, Community Social Services, Nurses, and Community Health bargaining tables are being backfilled by temporary labour relations staff to ensure members' labour relations servicing needs do not suffer during the bargaining period.

Starting in February this year, all labour relations staff were directed to focus on negotiating essential service levels. By law in British Columbia, essential service levels must be in place in the event of job action in the health care and community social service sectors. As we – and all the other health care and social services unions – are in bargaining, the process has been underway since then, and we expect these negotiations to continue well into the summer.

HSA is fortunate to have very skilled labour relations specialists, as well as experienced and effective stewards advocating for our members. Changes in how the services members provide are organized constantly affect how the union can best work to represent members' interests, and I am confident that the work we have done to improve service for members will result in long-term improvements for members. **R**



# HEALTH SCIENCES ASSOCIATION

The union delivering modern health care

HSA's Board of Directors is elected by members to run HSA between Annual Conventions. Members should feel free to contact them with any concerns.

**President** [webpres@hsabc.org]  
Reid Johnson, MSW  
Centre for Ability

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Surrey Memorial Hospital

**Region 8** [REGION08@hsabc.org]  
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Nicola Valley General Hospital, Merrit

**Region 9** [REGION09@hsabc.org]  
Janice Morrison (Secretary-Treasurer)  
Physiotherapist, Kootenay Lake Hospital

**Region 10** [REGION10@hsabc.org]  
Heather Sapergia, Laboratory Technologist  
Prince George Regional Hospital

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS**

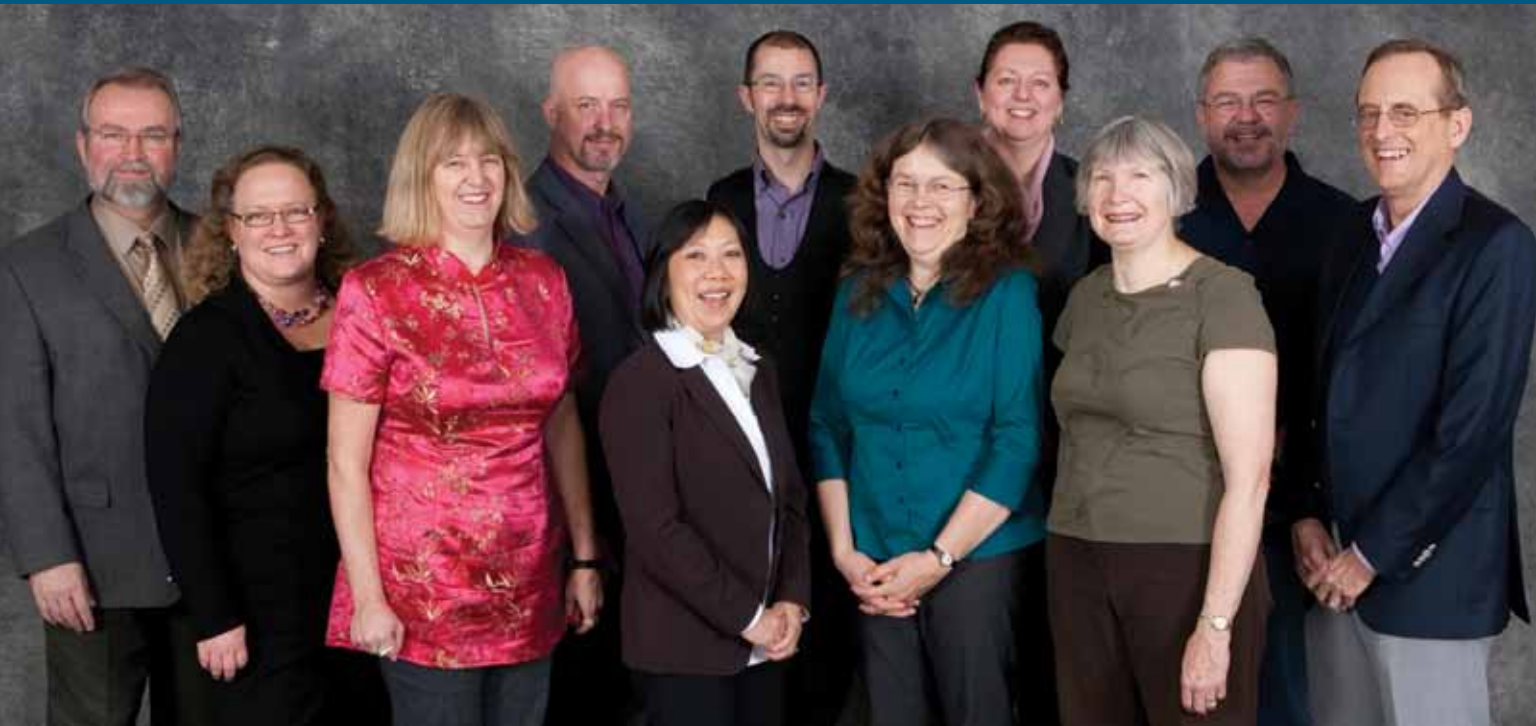
Jeanne Meyers, Labour Relations & Legal Services  
Rebecca Maurer, Human Resources  
and Operations

**MANAGING EDITOR**

Miriam Sobrino

**EDITOR**

David Bieber



(from left) Reid Johnson, Janice Morrison, Marg Beddis, Brendan Shields, Anita Bardal, Kimball Finigan, Anne Davis, Val Avery, Heather Sapergia, Allen Peters, Bruce MacDonald



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