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September 24, 2018

Update on contract talks for BC's health science professionals

The first two weeks of bargaining for a new collective agreement for the province's 18,000 health science professionals working in hospitals and communities around the province concluded last week after a series of meetings between unions, represented by the Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association (HSPBA) and employers represented by the Health Employers' Association of BC (HEABC). The union bargaining team includes representation from all unions with members working under the collective agreement, and the employer bargaining team includes representatives from HEABC and health authorities around the province.

The current collective agreement, which came into effect in April 2014 and continues to March 31, 2019, was ambitious in its direction to the union and employer bargaining associations to focus on developing a modernized classification system, protecting benefits, and addressing issues of recruitment and retention. The work on those areas has been continuous throughout the life of the agreement. The HSPBA welcomes recent Ministry of Health initiatives and policies focused on strengthening the delivery of patient care within a strong publicly funded health care system.

That commitment informs the contract proposals being discussed at the bargaining table, and underscores the unions' proposals aimed at securing contract improvements that promote job satisfaction and security to help support the Ministry of Health address shortages, and promote stability and continuity in the healthcare workforce.

Proposals discussed to date are related to classifications, benefits, and improvements to the Enhanced Disability Management Program and accommodation process. The parties have identified a number of common interests, and the discussions are building momentum.

Talks on these issues, and on addressing workload challenges, are scheduled to continue for the next two weeks.

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HSPBA represents 18,000 union members, the majority of whom are represented by HSA. Other unions represented at the bargaining table are CUPE, BCGEU, PEA, and HEU. The current collective agreement expires in March 2019. For regular bargaining updates, check the HSA website at www.hsabc.org, or follow us on our Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/HSABC>, or Twitter account: @hsabc.

It is important for HSA to be able to contact you. Log in on HSA's website at <https://hsabc.org/contact/member-contact-update-form> to ensure your contact information is up-to-date.

HSA's representatives to the HSPBA bargaining committee are:

Chief negotiator: Jeanne Meyers

Bargaining Committee members:

- (co-chair) Janice Morrison, HSA Vice President and physiotherapist, Kootenay Lake Hospital
- (co-chair) Mandi Ayers, HSA Board of Directors and lab technologist, Bulkley Valley Hospital
- Candis Johnson, Supported Childcare Consultant, Child Development Centre of Prince George
- Chad Lazaruk, Medical Radiation Technologist, Victoria General Hospital
- Jing-Yi Ng, Pharmacist, Burnaby Hospital
- Kim Pflieger, Cardiology Technologist, Penticton General Hospital
- Kathleen Lee, Dietitian, St. Paul's Hospital
- Kieran Shoker, Pharmacist, Cancer Centre for the North