

Bargaining Update



FACILITIES

Scheduling, portability, and Indigenous rights dominate contract talks this week

After more than five months of negotiations, the nine-union Facilities Bargaining Association (FBA) and the Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC) have signed off on several important proposals, as they work to achieve a renewed collective agreement for 58,000 health care workers.

This week's contract talks focused on securing new language on employee-initiated scheduling opportunities, portability of benefits and seniority, and Indigenous members' rights.

"We achieved some landmark language around scheduling and portability that will provide workers with more flexibility, opportunities, and job security," says Meena Brisard, HEU secretary-business manager and lead spokesperson for the FBA. "And as part of our shared commitment to truth and reconciliation, we made some important contract gains for Indigenous health care workers."

The Indigenous-specific anti-racism (ISAR) working group developed new language that provides paid leave for ceremonial, cultural and spiritual events for Indigenous workers, as well as unpaid leave to run for public office, including band councils. The parties also agreed to a process for hiring more Indigenous workers to provide cultural expertise, knowledge and leadership in health settings.

New language on portability also provides important gains for FBA members who accept employment at another work site covered by the facilities collective agreement. In addition to the current contract provisions, where unused credits for sick leave and vacation entitlements can be ported, employees would also be able to port special leave, and the timeframe to port seniority and benefits has been increased and standardized.

The FBA bargaining committee also successfully negotiated a groundbreaking *Memorandum of Agreement* on scheduling entitled The "Employee-Initiated Rotation Proposals and the Rotation Support Fund." This will provide members – with union support and rotation personnel – an opportunity to revise their unit/department rotations that are mutually agreed to, and approved by impacted regular employees with a 75 per cent in-favour vote. The goal is to reduce the number of six-day rotations, fulfill staffing and operational requirements, and promote recruitment and retention.

Contract talks continue next week.

The facilities subsector collective agreement covers more than 58,000 health care workers. HEU represents more than 90 per cent of these workers. Health employers are represented by the Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC).

To keep up to date on FBA bargaining, please visit www.heu.org.

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