



December 22, 2022

Health science professionals ratify new collective agreement

Members of the Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association have voted 77 per cent in favour of accept a new collective agreement effective April 21, 2022 to March 31, 2025.

Highlights of the contract include a general wage increase of about 12-14 per cent over three years for all members, plus additional increases for most members based on a review of all classifications over this period. The general wage increase is retroactive to April 1, 2022.

“The CUPE bargaining committee went to the table with our members’ priorities clear from the start. These included making significant wage increases, given that we had fallen behind our colleagues in other provinces and even other health authorities within B.C.” said HSPBA bargaining committee and CUPE 15 member Jennifer Kassimatis.

“Our members also wanted us to address recruitment and retention, as so many health science professionals continue to struggle with unsustainable workloads. We were determined to achieve an agreement that would reflect the true importance of health science professionals within the health care system.”

HSPBA lead negotiator Jeanne Meyers said the new collective agreement also includes strategies and action addressing severe staff shortages in the health science professions.

“This contract is important for health science professionals, not just because it raises wages to competitive levels across the country but also because it establishes ongoing processes to address shortages and vacancies, and it recognizes the critical role health science professionals play on the health care team, including asserting their right to a safe and healthy workplace,” said Meyers.

For the first time in decades, the contract provides significant pay increases. In addition:

- Cost of Living Adjustments are built in to protect pay against longer-term increases in inflation.
- Improvements to premiums for on-call, short-notice, super shifts and weekend shifts will put more money in many members’ pockets.
- A long-overdue update to the classification system provides more recognition of the complexity and scope of work, more opportunity for career advancement, and more respect.
- Specific provisions address the recruitment and retention crisis.

- Occupational health and safety changes address mental health under duress, unsafe workloads, infection control standards, access to personal protective equipment and prevention of violence in the workplace.
- Enhanced education leaves support professional development.
- A new focus on implementing recommendations to support the inclusion of Indigenous workers, patients and clients will work toward reconciliation and culturally-safe health care.
- Inclusion of communities that experience marginalization in the health care system is a major priority.

In addition to Indigenous-specific anti-racism measures agreed to in the collective agreement, HSPBA was successful in negotiating a ground-pilot project to explore alternatives to the Christian/colonial focus on statutory holidays to better reflect the diverse cultures and practices of health care workers.

The general wage increases are retroactive to the first pay period after April 1, 2022, and the new premium rates are effective as of December 22, 2022.

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