

April 5, 2006

### **Health science professionals ratify collective agreement**

Health science professionals have voted 90 per cent to accept a new collective agreement. The agreement covers the Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association (previously the Paramedical Professional Bargaining Association) and has a four-year term, from April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2010.

The new agreement covers more than 14,000 health science professionals, including 600 CUPE members, working in BC hospitals and community health facilities – including physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nutritionists, pharmacists, social workers, respiratory therapists, psychologists, speech and language pathologists, and public health inspectors.

CUPE bargaining team members Caroline Mewis and Frank deWaard say the union bargaining association made inroads on CUPE members' bargaining objectives.

The agreement includes:

- Wage increases averaging 10.3 per cent over four years;
- A signing bonus of \$3670 (pro-rated as appropriate);
- A new, cost-shared Long Term Disability Plan which will reduce employee-paid premiums by 70 per cent;
- Reduction of a wage gap imposed by the provincial government in 2001, while recognizing the need for ongoing labour market adjustments;
- An increase in the mileage allowance – to \$0.50 from \$0.44;
- New language on reimbursement of deductibles for vehicle damage claims up to \$500;
- An increase in the Education Leave allowance from \$400 to \$600;
- Improvements to Displacement and Bumping Language.

“This agreement addresses some long-standing collective agreement issues, but the challenge of training and keeping increasingly specialized health science professionals here in B.C. continues,” says Caroline Mewis.

CUPE representatives on the Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association (previously PPBA) are Caroline Mewis (Local 718, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, Richmond), Frank deWaard (Local 23, Fraser Health Authority, Burnaby) and Meena Cheema, CUPE National Representative.

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