

WITHOUT PREJUDICE

LETTER OF AGREEMENT

Between:

HEALTH EMPLOYERS ASSOCIATION OF BC ("HEABC")

And:

NURSES' BARGAINING ASSOCIATION ("NBA")

Re: Framework Agreement, Policy Issues Discussions and Bargaining Process

Purpose

1. The purpose of this Letter of Agreement is to provide stability to the Health Sector by establishing a framework for collaborative and interest-based discussions to renew the HEABC-NBA Collective Agreement which expired March 31, 2004.

Framework

2. The parties agree that, excepting funding for the Occupational Health and Safety Agency, if continued, any changes to the Collective Agreement will be implemented within the total compensation base in place as of March 31, 2004, although the parties may agree to cost reallocations within this net 0-0 (2-year) mandate for the Collective Agreement.
3. The parties agree there will be no changes to hourly rates or benefits or time-off provisions in the Collective Agreement.
4.
 - a) If the parties cannot reach agreement on any of the issues listed in paragraphs 9 and 12 below, by July 30 or such later date as may be mutually agreed for the purposes of these discussions, the parties agree to recommend for ratification to their members that the April 1, 2001 - March 31, 2004 Provincial Collective Agreement between HEABC and the NBA be rolled over and remain in place for the period April 1, 2004 - March 31, 2006.
 - b) If the parties reach agreement on any of the issues listed in paragraphs 9 and 12 below, by July 30 or such later date as may be mutually agreed for

the purposes of these discussions, the parties agree to recommend for ratification to their members that the April 1, 2001 - March 31, 2004 Provincial Collective Agreement between HEABC and the NBA be rolled over, inclusive of any Collective Agreement changes agreed to under this Letter of Agreement, and remain in place for the period April 1, 2004 - March 31, 2006.

Policy Discussions

5. The parties agree that a discussion process regarding health policy issues will be established and each party will designate non-bargaining committee representatives with operational experience to take part in this process.
6. Either party may access the technical assistance it deems necessary to supplement its discussion team and will advise the other party in advance of the individuals providing technical assistance and the nature of the assistance to be provided.
7. The parties agree that the Assistant Deputy Minister, Clinical Innovation and Integration, will chair the policy discussions and the Ministry of Health Services will have a representative participating in the policy discussions to ensure that the implications of policy proposals are understood in the context of the Ministry's health system redesign agenda and do not go beyond the mandate set out in 2) above.
8. There will be a strict media ban during the period of discussions except that either side may communicate with its members.
9. The policy teams will make good faith efforts to develop recommendations on the following issues:
 - a) A Letter of Understanding about increasing regular full time positions
 - b) Nurse scheduling options: which increase choices for nurses and improve operational efficiency.
 - c) Hours of work
 - d) Facilitating the employment of new graduates
 - e) Phased retirement

The parties recognize that different approaches may be required for items referred to in Section 9 (a) and 9 (b) for different work sites.

10. The parties agree that any recommendations reached by the policy teams will be referred to the bargaining committees no later than July 7, 2004 or such later date as may be mutually agreed for the purposes of these discussions.

Bargaining Process

11. The parties agree that the collective bargaining process currently underway will be adjourned consistent with this Letter of Agreement (point 10 above).
12. The bargaining process will continue after the policy discussions are completed and until July 30, unless otherwise extended by mutual agreement. The bargaining committees will be confined to the following agenda items in addition to 9 a), b), c), d) and e) above.
 - f) Occupational Health and Safety Agency for Healthcare (OHSAH)
 - g) Long-term Disability Supplementary Benefit
 - h) Mileage for Community Nurses
 - i) Displacements, Placement in Vacancies, and Bumping

Signed and dated the _____ day of May, 2004:

On behalf of NBA

On behalf of HEABC

On behalf of NBA

On behalf of HEABC

On behalf of NBA

On behalf of HEABC