



## Community Bargaining Association

**COMPREHENSIVE REPORT**

YOUR BCGEU BARGAINING COMMITTEE

**T**his was a challenging round of bargaining, but your unwavering support helped secure a historic agreement with the largest general wage increases since our bargaining association was created, protection of your benefits, and dozens more improvements that will make a real difference in members' lives.

All eight unions in our Community Bargaining Association (CBA) are unanimously recommending ratification of this agreement.

When we went into bargaining last spring, we had dozens of priorities from members like you. You gave us clear direction that closing the gap between the Community Agreement and the Facilities Agreement was essential. By autumn, we had made progress on many items, but the government had dug in their heels on two key issues: bringing wages in line with other sectors and securing your benefits.

The committee reached back out to members for input, and you made it clear that these were non-negotiable, and you were ready to do whatever it took to achieve them. Your solidarity gave the committee the courage to keep fighting. Our relentless pressure forced the government to put new money on the table to close the gap with the Facilities Agreement and protect your extended health and long-term disability benefits.

We are proud of what we accomplished together in this round of bargaining. The next step is to make sure you have all the information you need as we get set to vote - see details on page 3. Voting will be open from February 13, 2023, to February 28, 2023.

In solidarity,

Scott De Long  
BCGEU Community Health Services Vice-President  
on behalf of the CBA bargaining committee

**Bargaining Wins**

- ✓ The largest general wage increases since the CBA was created
- ✓ Joint Community Benefit Trust secured
- ✓ Significant gains on wage parity with the FBA

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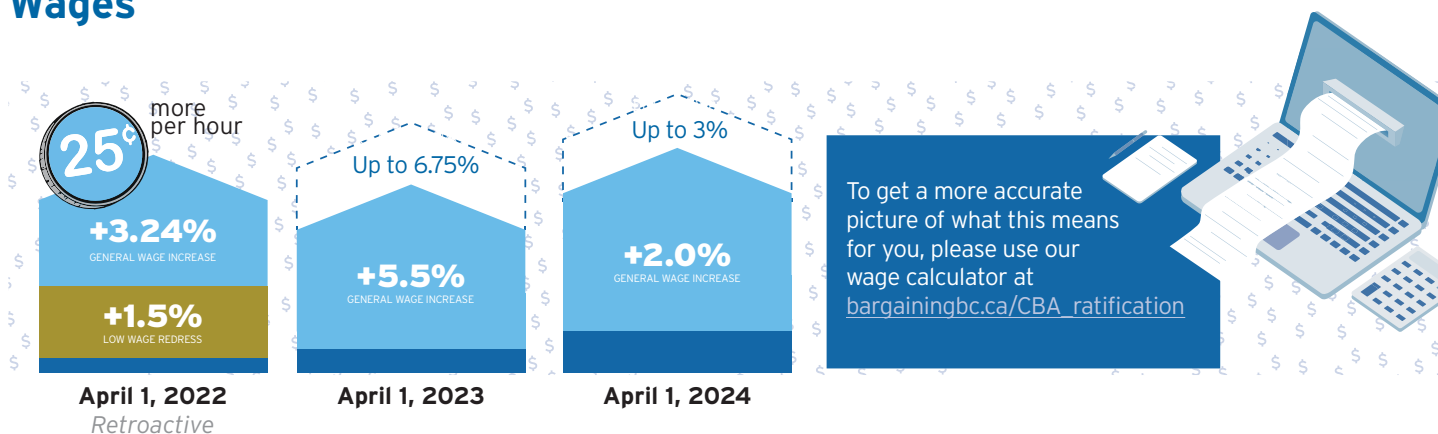
**How to use this document**

This report is your guide to our tentative agreement and the ratification process. Inside you'll find details of the agreement, how to get answers to questions that you may have, and more.



# Tentative Agreement Highlights

## Wages



An average **increase of 14% to 16%** for each step of the wage grid over three years.



Expanded **mobility rights** for workers who want to move jobs within their health authority.



**Guaranteed minimum pay** for regular CHWs on windows of availability.



A funding commitment to ensure the long-term viability of the **Joint Community Benefit Trust**.



**Premium increase** for weekend shifts and a new evening shift premium.



50% of costs for employer-requested medical certificates to be **paid by the employer**.



Significant gains on **wage parity** with those working under the Facilities Agreement (FBA) in hospitals and care facilities, including the elimination of Step 1.



Extension of the CRA vehicle allowance rate to **all employees** covered by the CBA.



New **overtime** distribution language that includes seniority.



A variety of improvements to address chronic **recruitment and retention** issues in our sector.



An additional day of **paid vacation** for all regular employees each year.

## Vote!

Voting credentials will be sent by email. Visit [my.bcgeu.ca](https://my.bcgeu.ca) to make sure we have your correct email address on file.



# Voting on this tentative agreement

Voting for our tentative agreement will be conducted electronically through an independent, third-party, online voting platform called Simply Voting ([www.simplyvoting.com](http://www.simplyvoting.com)).

Members will receive voting credentials by email. The credential can be used to log in to the online voting platform. Any type of device (computer, tablet, smart phone) can be used to vote. If you do not have access to a device to cast your ballot, you will be able to go to your local BCGEU office and cast your ballot there.

The email with your credentials will come directly from Simply Voting. To ensure you receive your voting credentials, please make sure that your email address on file with our union is correct. You can see what addresses are on file and, if necessary, update them on the BCGEU Member Portal - [my.bcgeu.ca](http://my.bcgeu.ca). You can also call your local union office and ask them to update your information.

Voting opens on  
**February 13, 9am PST**  
and closes on  
**February 28, 4pm PST**

There are a number of places in this document that link to PDF or other online sources. All of those documents can be found on

**[bargainingBC.ca/CBA\\_ratification](http://bargainingBC.ca/CBA_ratification)**

or by scanning this QR code:



## Questions about your tentative agreement?

### Visit our ratification website

At [bargainingbc.ca/CBA\\_ratification](http://bargainingbc.ca/CBA_ratification) you can find a link to the wage calculator, answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) and other ratification materials.

### Come to one of our education sessions!

To ensure that members' questions about the new tentative agreement are answered, our bargaining committee will be hosting a series of education sessions to review key elements and answer questions about the tentative agreements - including province-wide telephone town halls, and smaller in-person and Zoom meetings for each local. To make sure you are ready to cast your vote with confidence, please plan to attend at least one session.

### Telephone town halls

- Thursday, February 23 at 6:00pm PST
- Friday, February 24 at 1:00pm PST

**NOTE** You will be called when the telephone town hall starts. Please visit [my.bcgeu.ca](http://my.bcgeu.ca) to ensure your phone number is up to date so we can reach you.

### Local Meetings

Each BCGEU Component 8 local will host a meeting for members in their area. Please watch your email for more details.



# What's in the agreement?

To read the full text of these changes, please see the "Detailed summary of changes" document at [bargainingbc.ca/CBA\\_ratification](https://bargainingbc.ca/CBA_ratification)

## Wages, premiums and monetary compensation

### Low Wage Redress (LWR)

**All grid levels will receive an estimated 1.5 per cent increase – retroactive to April 1, 2022 –** to narrow the gap between our agreement and similar roles in the Facilities Agreement (FBA) in hospitals and care facilities.

### General Wage Increases are as follows:

*Note: These are in addition to the Low Wage Redress in year 1.*

- **April 1, 2022: \$0.25 per hour plus a 3.24% wage increase.** (Retroactive)
- **April 1, 2023: 5.5% wage increase plus the potential of an additional 1.25% Cost of Living Adjustment** if inflation exceeds 5.5%.
- **April 1, 2024: 2.00% wage increase plus the potential of an additional 1.00% Cost of Living Adjustment** if inflation exceeds 2.00%.

**Each step in the agreement will receive an average increase of 14 to 16 per cent over three years based on Cost of Living Adjustments.** This increase will be slightly higher for lower paid grids, and slightly lower for higher paid grids due to the application of the \$0.25 increase in the first year.

LWR in this agreement builds on the 2019-2022 agreement that saw approximately \$40 million injected into wages and premiums.

This second application of LWR should ensure that as of April 1, 2022 the top rate (Step 4) of all classifications should be equal to that under the FBA. Although we still have a system of wage steps in our agreement, this ensures that all workers at Step 4 are paid on an equal basis at the start of the agreement.

To see how your wages would increase, visit our online wage calculator: [BargainingBC.ca/CBA\\_ratification](https://BargainingBC.ca/CBA_ratification)

per hour effective (and retroactive to) April 1, 2022.

- An evening premium will be established for the first time in our agreement effective April 1, 2023. **The weekend premium will be \$0.25 per hour** for shifts where at least half of the hours fall between 4 p.m. and midnight.
- The night premium remains \$2.50 per hour for shifts where at least half of the hours fall between midnight and 8 a.m.
- **The on call rate has been increased from \$1.00 per hour to \$3.40 per hour**, effective April 1, 2023.

The significant increase in fuel costs led to an interim agreement with Health Authorities that tied the vehicle allowance rate to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) Reasonable Per-Kilometre Allowance. This only applied to Community Health Workers (CHWs) initially and then was expanded to all Health Authority employees. **We have achieved language that permanently ties the Vehicle Allowance rate to the CRA rate for all employees covered by the CBA**, including those working for affiliates.

The CRA has recently announced another increase, and this means that members will receive \$0.68 per kilometre for the first 5000 kms and \$0.62 for each kilometre after that each year.

## Recruitment and retention

We spent a considerable amount of time during negotiations discussing the unique challenges to recruitment and retention of employees under the CBA agreement. Although there are many changes that should make an impact on retention, there are some specific changes that are focused solely on recruitment.

Effective April 1, 2023, Step 1 of the grid will cease to exist. This will mean that **any new employees hired after this date will start directly at the Step 2 rate and any existing employee still at Step 1 on March 31, 2023, will move directly to Step 2.**

**Employers can now credit new employees with previous experience in their classification.** It is not mandatory but can be employed to attract new employees from other bargaining associations, independent health, and the private sector.

One of the long-standing frustrations of our members was the lack of language about how overtime was distributed or how (or if) seniority played a role. This issue was a priority for

## Premiums and reimbursements

In addition to updating and consolidating language in the agreement regarding premiums, we have made significant gains in premiums:

- The **weekend premium increases from \$0.25 to \$0.50**



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our team, and we have achieved a major step forward: **The agreement now has parameters for how overtime is distributed when it is known in advance and seniority plays a role.** This includes language that covers Community Health Workers (CHWs).

The CBA unions have agreed to participate in both a province-wide, and CBA-specific committee with HEABC and the Ministry of Health. The goal of both committees is to discuss ways to address staff shortages in the health sector. It is our hope that we will be able to highlight the unique challenges the CBA has when compared to other health sector agreements in terms of both language and monetary provisions.

## Sick leave, bereavement leave and benefits

There are three very positive changes in relation to sick leave and medical appointments.

**Casuals now have access to five days of sick leave as per the Employment Standards Act**, and there is an additional day of special leave for employees who must travel long distances to medical appointments. Additionally, the agreement requires all employer requested medical certificates to be paid 50% by the employer.

As we highlighted several times to members, there was a real danger that members would have their benefits reduced, including the curtailing or elimination of long-term disability (LTD), due to underfunding of the Joint Community Benefit Trust (JCBT) and the impact of COVID-19 on LTD claims.

**We are pleased to announce that the JCBT, and therefore our benefits, are secure for the foreseeable future** and hopefully will one day result in the trust being able to enhance member benefits.

This was achieved by HEABC employers and the constituent unions having the provincial government review the status of the JCBT and that has resulted in changes coming into effect after ratification. Specifically, the provincial government will be injecting a large amount of money in the form of COVID-19 relief as well as altering the funding structure effective April 1, 2024, to include overtime hours in the contributions employers make to the trust.

Upon ratification, the parties will meet with the Public Sector

Employers' Council (PSEC) to review the long-term health of the trust and funding structure moving forward.

## Community Health Workers

Community Health Workers (CHWs) scheduled under Article 15 were the subject of many of our discussions over the past eleven months. The parties agreed on a number of updates and changes to the language

Significant improvements include: **guaranteed minimum hours for regular "windows of availability positions", overtime distribution language that includes seniority**, and an MOA on Health Authorities maintaining a minimum ratio of positions as fixed shift positions for the duration of the agreement.

Additional changes include:

- language covering fixed shift positions (including shift exchanges)
- Clarity around topping up regulars with ongoing hours
- A process to jointly interpret and clarify the entitlement to two days off after six days in a row.

## Vacation and paid holidays

There were numerous proposals from constituent unions seeking additional days of leave in many forms.

To achieve the goal of having additional time off for all employees to deal with the many different occasions when time off is needed, **this agreement adds an additional day of paid vacation for all regular employees.**

In addition to the additional day of paid vacation, **employees will now be able to hold back up to five days of paid vacation to schedule outside the vacation selection period** so members have days available throughout the year to deal with the many reasons why members need a day off work.

We have also formalized the inclusion of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in the agreement and increased the corresponding "pay in lieu" rate by 0.4% per hour for part-time, casual, and Community Health Workers.

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## Postings, bumping and Health Authority mobility

*Note: this section only applies to members employed by a Health Authority.*

The ability to move amongst the various workplaces within Health Authorities has been restricted in the past. Members were only able to port a small portion of their entitlements and were not considered an internal (or first consideration) candidate.

Effective 120 days after ratification, **members will be able to move to different positions in their Health Authority and carry all their accumulated entitlements, including seniority and banks**, just as they have previously within their own worksite.

Effective ten months from ratification, **Health Authorities will create a single seniority list for all CBA employees and members will be considered an internal candidate for any CBA position within their Health Authority.**

Finally, we have put language in the agreement that has been in effect for many years that outlines the entitlements of an existing Health Authority employee when they move voluntarily or involuntarily between Bargaining Associations in the same Health Authority. This is commonly referred to as 'Portability Plus'.

In order to facilitate this process, we have made numerous changes to job posting and bumping language. In addition, we have reduced the length of time a position must be vacant to be subject to posting from 9 months to 6 months and put a maximum on the number of temporary postings an employee (based on status) can accept in a year.

## Equity and inclusion

Provisions aimed at improving inclusivity and human rights recognitions.

Ensuring that all members can see themselves in the language of our agreement **we have made additional changes to ensure the agreement is gender neutral**, and we have updated the language for casuals to reference "winter break" and "spring break". This also includes gender neutral language to describe family members and the inclusion of sibling-in-law as a member of the immediate family and eligible for three days bereavement leave rather than one.

**We have established trans inclusion language** that will support members through their journey covering name and other legal changes as well as created paid leave for gender affirming care.

The provincial government, HEABC, individual employers, and constituent unions of the CBA are committed to truth and reconciliation. To that end, we have created language acknowledging the unique characteristics of the Indigenous community, **created language specific to the recruitment and retention of Indigenous workers, created cultural leave provisions, and expanded the definition of family for Indigenous employees.**

## Occupational health and safety (OHS)

The pandemic, opioid crisis, and ongoing staffing shortages inspired a significant amount of discussion at the bargaining table and resulted in a number of changes.

Most notably **language was included to address aggressive behavior, violence prevention training, critical incident debriefing/defusing, ergonomics, and psychological safety and health.**

We have also included instructive language that encourages workers to bring forward workload issues that cause our members a considerable amount of stress to their leadership for instruction on how to mitigate the workload.

The CBA is also continuing to participate in SWITCH BC which is a provincial organization funded by the Ministry of Health and we sit as a partner at that table along with all other healthcare bargaining associations.

A pandemic wasn't the only thing our members faced during the last three years. In recognition of the pandemic, opioid crisis, wildfires and floods, the CBA will be consulted under language relating to provincial emergencies such as these in two MOAs entitled Local and Provincial Emergencies and the Pandemic Information Sharing Forum.

## Union and activist rights

During each round of bargaining we review the collective agreement to update and enhance the rights of the union and our activists.

We were able to secure or clarify a number of language

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changes including the rights to:

- A steward during the displacement and bumping process and bullying and harassment investigations.
- Know the purpose of a meeting when called for by the employer.
- Have and view the collective agreement on employer computers and devices.
- A faster process to address union leave denials.
- A process that allows our union to resolve many termination grievances faster than before.

In addition, we were also able to include language that addresses the ever-changing nature of technology in relation to virtual union orientations and more streamlined access to seniority lists and membership information.

Finally, we were able to finally secure language that includes a clear timeline on the implementation of non-monetary and subsequently monetary provisions of the agreement when new workers are organized into CBA.

## Your bargaining committee

The Community Bargaining Association is made up of representatives from the eight unions whose members are covered by the agreement. As the union representing the majority of the 21,000 workers covered by the agreement, the BCGEU leads the association and the bargaining process

### Members

Scott De Long	VP for Component 8, Community Health Services, and Bargaining Committee Chair
MJ Colquhoun	Component 8 second representative and Bargaining Committee Chair
Charmaine Fines	Local 802
Masoud Aminzavvar	Local 803
Shelley Einarson	Local 804
Darla Holmwood	Local 807
Teen Boschma	Local 801
Kari Michaels	BCGEU Executive Vice President

### Staff

Richard Tones	Staff representative
Monique Wemhof	Staff representative

## Scheduling and hours of work

Article 14 is the hours of work and scheduling language that covers the majority of members under the CBA, and we were able to address a number of outstanding issues and improve clarity. We have been able to update and enhance language around Modified Hours of Work Agreements and Job Fairs as well as clarify the entitlement to two clear days off work in any eight-day period (Rolling 8 Principle).

## Agreement Housekeeping

Clarifications and corrections in the collective agreement.

A number of proposals were submitted by both parties resulting in:

- The removal of MSP premium language
- The formalization of the Joint Community Benefit Trust (JCBT)
- The deletion of dormant Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs)
- Implementing previously agreed to language that resulted from ICBC's rate change
- WCB Act references
- An updated list of arbitrators and technology references.

## Classifications

To ensure that every job under the CBA is paid fairly for the work required, our agreement has a section on Job Evaluation and Classification. This detailed system requires review every so often to ensure that it reflects changes in technology and terminology. The updates in this agreement will not impact rates of pay or the classification a person is in, but is instead an attempt to make sure that the language used in the benchmarks is relevant to today's work.

We have also agreed to try to develop a classification education program that will include resources for managers, supervisors, stewards, officers, and staff to better understand the classification program. We hope this will have an impact on the number and effectiveness of appeals moving forward.

Finally, we have formalized "laying over language" that details the minimum wage gap between bargaining unit employees and those they supervise.