

# THE REPORT

HEALTH SCIENCES ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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HSA MEMBER AND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST JOANNA RAINER

## TRANSFORMING PRACTICE THROUGH EDUCATION

SAN'YAS INDIGENOUS CULTURAL SAFETY TRAINING

# LET'S BUILD A FOUNDATION THAT WE CAN ALL STAND ON

It's hard to believe that 2020 is soon coming to a close. It's no secret that it's been a challenging year. I am so proud of our members' commitment to delivering quality public healthcare and social services in the midst of a pandemic that has taken a heavy physical and emotional toll on the communities we serve.

With the October provincial election now over, HSA is focusing on the important work before us in advance of the provincial budget, which will be presented by the government in early 2021. We are continuing to lobby on the issues that matter most to our members, paying close attention to the important window of opportunity we have now to implement a recovery strategy that repairs longstanding cracks in our health and social systems.

As many economists have highlighted, there has never been a more fiscally opportune time for the province to borrow funds to make historic investments in BC's health and social infrastructure. The Bank of Canada has maintained a record-low overnight rate - also known as the policy interest rate - of .25 per cent, creating favourable borrowing conditions that are unprecedented.

HSA is calling on the province to increase investments in health care and social services in its upcoming budget, including capital investments that will expand publicly managed and non-profit seniors' care.

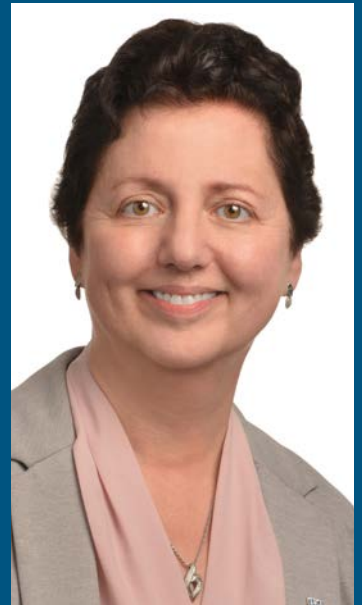
We're calling on the province to provide a significant funding boost for early intervention therapies in order to tackle the long waitlists that prevent

children with disabilities from accessing the rehabilitative services they need, when they need them. This funding is desperately needed to increase staffing in BC's Child Development Centers - a message we're taking to government.

Health science professionals are driving the delivery of public health care, and we are calling on the province to build on its recent efforts to address ongoing staff shortages in the health sciences. Over the past three years we've seen the government increase training spaces for priority professions facing critical shortages, but it can't stop here. We're asking the government to fund additional post-secondary training spaces, introduce new clinical leadership opportunities, and fund wage increases that are competitive with other provinces and the private sector.

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, the occupational health and safety of our members has been a serious and ongoing concern for HSA. HSA has advocated for increased protections for frontline workers and comprehensive, province-wide OH&S policies. In November, our tenacity reaped results, with the Ministry of Health issuing an updated policy mandating the wearing of masks in all health, long-term care, and assisted living facilities.

And HSA is continuing to push the government on granting presumptive coverage to all health care and social service workers, which would make it easier for our members to advance a workers' compensation claim after experiencing traumatic events at work.



HSA PRESIDENT VAL AVERY

“There has never been a more fiscally opportune time for the province to borrow funds to make historic investments in BC's health and social infrastructure.”

Just next door in Alberta, workers in public health care are facing a wave of attacks from Premier Jason Kenney and the United Conservative Party government. Bill 30 seeks to expand the privatization of healthcare through dramatically increasing the contracting out of publicly-funded surgeries. And in the middle of a public health crisis, the government announced a plan to cut 11,000 jobs at Alberta Health Services. Members of the Alberta Union of Public Employees (AUPE) are fighting back, and HSA stands in solidarity with workers defending their jobs and the public health care system.

Their struggle reminds us how precious public health care is, and to seize the opportunity we have before us in BC to build a solid foundation of quality and accessible care that leaves no one behind.

## 2021 SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES AVAILABLE FOR HSA MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Every year, HSA offers scholarships and bursaries to HSA members and their children. The application period for 2021 awards is now open and will close Jan. 14, 2021. Ten scholarships will be awarded for full-time studies, twenty bursaries for full-time studies, and four bursaries for part-time studies. Two indigenous bursaries will be awarded to indigenous students in BC.

The criteria and details are set out on the application forms available at: [www.hsabc.org/member-benefits/scholarships-and-bursaries](http://www.hsabc.org/member-benefits/scholarships-and-bursaries).

Completed application forms and transcripts must be emailed to the HSA office no later than Thurs., Jan. 14, 2021 at 11:59 pm. Mailed applications will also be accepted if post-marked on or before Jan. 14. Email submissions are preferred.

Successful applicants will be notified by letter before the end of May 2021.

If you have any questions, please contact the HSA Education Department at [education@hsabc.org](mailto:education@hsabc.org) or call the HSA office at 604-517-0994 or 1-800-663-2017.

BC FEDERATION  
OF LABOUR  
CONVENTION, NOV.  
11: HSA PRESIDENT  
VAL AVERY SERVED  
AS CO-CHAIR OF  
THE FEDERATION'S  
RESOLUTIONS  
COMMITTEE.

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# NEW PROVINCE-WIDE POLICY PROVIDES GREATER PROTECTION FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS

THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH HAS RELEASED AN UPDATED POLICY CONCERNING THE WEARING OF MASKS BY WORKERS, PATIENTS, AND VISITORS IN ALL HEALTH CARE FACILITIES, PROGRAMS, AND SERVICES.

The policy applies to all facilities and settings where health care services are provided, including outpatient clinics, as well as long term care and seniors assisted living facilities.

HSA members began to raise concerns as soon as the COVID pandemic emerged early this year.

Under the new policy, every individual, including patients and visitors, attending a health care facility and in all settings where health care is provided is required to wear a mask. The policy also includes a requirement for all visitors, but not patients, to wear masks in long term care and seniors assisted living facilities. In addition, all persons working in a long-term care facility or seniors assisted living residence must wear a medical mask at all times, including in common areas and break rooms unless eating and/or drinking.

Since March, HSA and other health care unions have raised the issue and pushed for province-wide policies with the Ministry of Health, WorkSafe BC, and employers. HSA is pleased that the concerted advocacy has finally resulted in a comprehensive and consistent

policy that enhances protection for all members of the health care team, patients, clients, and families.

All the health authorities have received the policy, and have directions from the Ministry of Health to implement it as soon as possible.

HEALTH MINISTER ADRIAN DIX AND CHIEF PROVINCIAL HEALTH OFFICER DR. BONNIE HENRY PROVIDE AN UPDATE ON COVID-19 ON NOV. 27.



PHOTO: PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, FLICKR

# APPLICATIONS ARE NOW OPEN FOR THE COMMUNITY HEALTH RETRAINING FUND

AS A RESULT OF COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS, UP TO \$10,000 IN FUNDING IS AVAILABLE TO HSA MEMBERS WORKING IN COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOR RETRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES AND PROGRAMS.

The fund is used to support workers who have been affected by lay-offs, reduced hours, or lost work as a result of cutbacks or contracting-out.

Funds are available to support members who wish to upgrade skills for current job or career advancement, access training

in order to receive recognition for international qualifications, or improve English as a second language skills.

For more information and to apply, visit [www.chrf-bcgeu.nationbuilder.com](http://www.chrf-bcgeu.nationbuilder.com).

# NUPGE SCHOLARSHIP WINNER HONOURS TOMMY DOUGLAS, FATHER OF MEDICARE, IN ESSAY

CONGRATULATIONS TO ATHENA SAMONTE, DAUGHTER OF HSA MEMBER FILNOR SAMONTE, WHO HAS BEEN AWARDED THE NATIONAL UNION OF PUBLIC AND GENERAL EMPLOYEES (NUPGE)'S TOMMY DOUGLAS SCHOLARSHIP FOR THE YEAR 2020.

Each year, NUPGE offers seven scholarships available to children, grandchildren, foster children, and foster grandchildren of NUPGE members and retirees.

Samonte received the \$2,500 award for her essay that honours the contributions of Tommy Douglas to Canadian society.

Known as the father of Canadian Medicare, Tommy Douglas was a social justice activist who served as Premier of Saskatchewan from 1944 to 1961 in what was considered the first social democratic government in North America. He then went

on to lead the New Democratic Party at the federal level.

"Tommy Douglas is one of those names that I feel goes unheard of most of the time," said Samonte. She said she didn't know very much about him until looking into him.

"I'm not one for history, but Tommy Douglas had a lot of progressive ideas," she explained. "I thought that that legacy was very interesting."

"I focused on the three ways Tommy Douglas shaped Canada and our systems," said Samonte, describing her essay. Her essay looks at how he created public automobile insurance, elected a socialist government, and afforded everyone public health-care.

In her essay she wrote, "With Douglas spearheading the first elected socialist government into creating public automobile insurance, passing legislation on the unionization of public

service workers, and universal health care for all regardless of financial state, Canada has been able to prosper and grow. What created his legacy was not him but his actions and his drive to make Canada into a just and equitable society for all people."

Samonte is currently in her first year of an undergraduate degree at Simon Fraser University. She first intended to study biomedical physiology and kinesiology, but said she is hoping to switch to behavioural neuroscience once she declares a major.

"It's my first semester, so I am honestly still figuring it out," she said.

"I am really interested in how the brain works and psychology, and things like that."

Filnor Samonte, Athena's mother, is an occupational therapist at Vancouver General Hospital.



SCHOLARSHIP WINNER ATHENA SAMONTE WITH MOTHER AND HSA MEMBER FILNOR SAMONTE.

# WILDCAT STRIKE MARKS START OF PUSHBACK TO ALBERTA GOVERNMENT CUTS

ON OCT. 26, HUNDREDS OF FRONTLINE HOSPITAL WORKERS IN ALBERTA WALKED OFF THE JOB IN RESPONSE TO AN ANNOUNCEMENT THAT ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES WAS PLANNING TO CUT 11,000 HEALTHCARE JOBS, AS PART OF ITS PLAN TO CONTRACT OUT CLEANING AND FOOD SERVICES.

The move adds to a growing list of cuts to public sector jobs and public services spearheaded by the United Conservative Party (UCP) Government under the leadership of Premier Jason Kenney.

Community and social services have also been targeted by the UCP government in recent months. In October alone, it was announced that the UCP would be cutting 546 positions in community and social services, defunding a camp for people with developmental disabilities, closing a treatment centre for homeless men, and closing a maternity clinic in Medicine Hat.

The Oct. 26 job action was taken by members of the Alberta Union of Public Employees (AUPE) who are fighting back against the Alberta government's cutbacks and privatization of public healthcare.

In July, Bill 30 was introduced in the legislature, paving the way for the contracting out of publicly funded surgeries. The same month, a UCP MLA introduced a private member's bill to reverse the ban on paid blood donations, and the government announced it was investigating the privatization of care for children and adults with disabilities. In October, plans by Alberta Health Services to offload some treatment and medication costs onto out-patients were leaked.

On Oct. 29, HSA sent a message of solidarity to striking AUPE workers.

## A MESSAGE OF SOLIDARITY

Dear AUPE President Guy Smith

On behalf of the 20,000 members of the Health Sciences Association of BC, I extend our solidarity and support for those workers who are fighting back against government cutbacks and privatization of public health care.

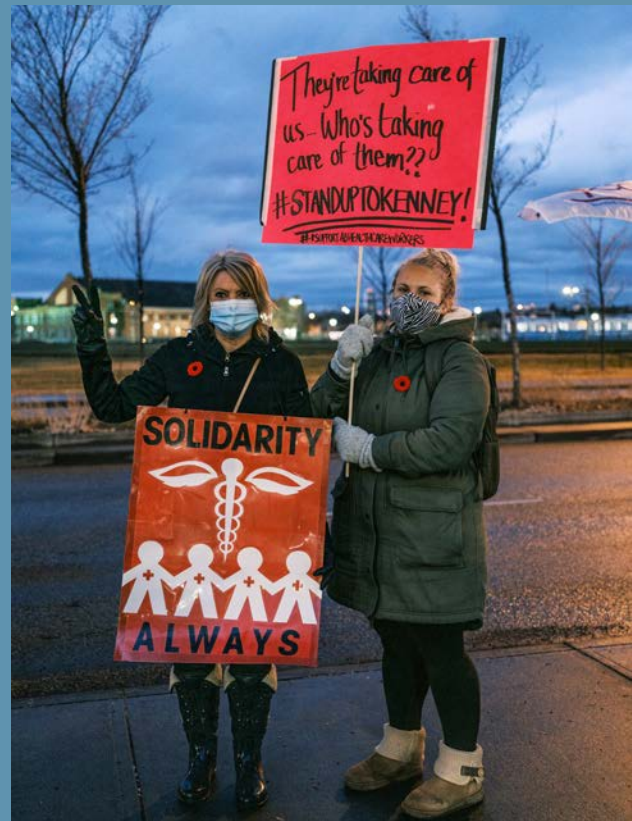
The actions of the UCP and Premier Jason Kenney are putting patients and workers at risk. Our best defence against COVID-19 is a strong, robust and resilient public health care system. The government's efforts to undermine public health in the middle of a global pandemic is irresponsible, dangerous and insulting to those workers who have been on the front line of this crisis.

The actions of AUPE members are courageous and bold. This kind of direct action is never done lightly or without deep thought for who it will impact. Their efforts to defend our public health care system is in the interest of all Albertans, especially at a time when we have never needed universal, accessible, public healthcare more.

As a union of health care and community social service workers, we understand what is at stake. We know first-hand what happens when health services are privatized and staffing cut. We know how important this fight is. We stand in solidarity with you.

In solidarity,

Val Avery  
President, Health Sciences Association of BC



PAID



SICK LEAVE FOR

ALL



BC WORKERS

## CANADA'S CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER MAKES THE CASE FOR PAID SICK LEAVE

**BY SAMANTHA PONTING**  
HSA COMMUNICATIONS

IN OCTOBER 2020, CANADA'S CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER DR. THERESA TAM RELEASED AN IN-DEPTH REPORT ANALYZING THE STATE OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN CANADA, SHARING IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON PEOPLE ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

The report, entitled, "From risk to resilience: An equity approach to COVID-19," asserts the importance of incorporating a health equity approach to pandemic preparedness, response, and recovery, recognizing the ways in which existing inequities across society have been exacerbated by the pandemic. As Dr. Tam writes, "No one is protected until everyone is protected."

The release of the report is timely, and coincides with the launch of the HSA Paid Sick Leave Campaign. The campaign is mobilizing members to send letters to Premier John Horgan, the minister of health and the minister of labour, asking that all workers across BC be provided with 10 days of paid sick

leave if they contract COVID-19, need to self-isolate, or must take care of a sick family member. In addition, the campaign calls on the government to deliver to all workers a minimum of three paid sick days per year, which would increase to up to ten days per year in accordance with the worker's hours of work accrued.

Additionally, the plan would fund a rebate program for new and existing businesses impacted by the pandemic to cover up to 75 per cent of paid sick leave costs while they get back on their feet.

The recent report released by Dr. Tam makes clear connections between job precarity, reduced workplace protections and risk of exposure to COVID-19. She names access to paid sick leave as an important factor in protecting worker and community health.

According to the report, only 42 per cent of working Canadians over the age of 18 report to have access to paid sick leave. This could impact the observance of public health guidelines. The report states that:

"Without paid sick leave, employees may lose income if they

become ill and are unable to work. Without employment security, they may lose their jobs if they stay home when sick. In either case, and particularly if they are economically insecure, workers may feel unable to comply with public health guidance to stay home when sick."

The report links the presence of infectious illnesses to such organizational factors as a lack of paid sick leave.

For essential workers who are precariously employed and unable to work from home, the report found that an absence of benefits and economic protections translates into increased risk of exposure. According to the report, "The absence of these protections is challenging at any time, but, during a pandemic, the consequences can be more severe and may increase risk of virus exposure and transmission." It names a lack of paid sick leave among such factors increasing risk. This reality holds particularly true for low-income workers.

During COVID-19, the absence of paid sick leave in labour legislation can result in life-threatening consequences. But even in the best of times, paid sick leave is important to protect public health and reduce health inequities.

*To join HSA's campaign or send a letter to your elected official, visit: [www.hsabc.org/paidsick-leave](http://www.hsabc.org/paidsick-leave).*

“The recent report released by Dr. Tam makes clear connections between job precarity, reduced workplace protections and risk of exposure to COVID-19.”

# MEET HSA'S NEW M

This fall, seven HSA members came together to form HSA's newest core member engager team. Together, they are reaching out to HSA members across BC to help build engaged chapters, and providing the tools members need to be successful at building the strength of the union.

The collective voice of HSA members can be powerful, and HSA member engagers are working to channel that voice into the HSA Paid Sick Leave campaign. As health care and community social service workers, we know that access to paid sick leave can play an important role in reducing health inequities across BC.

We see the toll that working while sick takes on our patients and clients, many of whom don't have the same workplace protections we do as union members. It's unacceptable, especially during a health crisis, that workers don't have the protections they need to take care of themselves and keep the broader public safe. Working together, we can put pressure on the province to do the right thing and legislate paid sick days for every worker in BC.



## EDITH MACHATTIE

### Why is paid sick leave for all good for public health?

Paid sick leave is a way to take care of each other. I think of all the workers who are supporting their families and struggling to pay the bills. I don't want people choosing between losing a day's wages and showing up to work sick. Everyone deserves this benefit.

### What is the role of a member engager?

I always want people to feel like they belong. Our role is to help our coworkers around the province feel connected and supported by each other. We build on the strengths of existing leaders at worksites and encourage new connections through running campaigns and having lots of one-on-one conversations and meetings.



## ARTHUR PANGILINAN

### Why did you join the member engagement team? Why is member engagement important?

The idea of bringing like-minded people together excites me, and this team is the perfect opportunity for that! Being able to foster a sense of community within our membership and provide a way for members to find relatedness and connection is vital, especially in these strange times when we need it the most.

COVID has impacted how we live, and one of the most disheartening consequences of our new normal is an increased sense of isolation and seclusion. I want to help reconnect members and hopefully share in something that is bigger and more important than ourselves.



## BROOKE CARTER

### Why does paid sick leave matter to you?

My position as a medical laboratory technologist is my first union job. Prior to working in healthcare, I was employed over the years in many different sectors, so I've experienced what it's like to not have paid sick leave. I once reported to work with active mono and a fever of 40 degrees because I didn't want to let down my colleagues. No one should ever have to do that.

### Why is member engagement important?

Member engagement is important because the union isn't a separate organization that serves the membership. It IS the membership. Engaged members are able to advocate for themselves and will stand up in support of each other, and that is what gives them power.



# MEMBER ENGAGERS

VOLUNTEER WITH THE TEAM, AND SEND A LETTER TO YOUR MLA AT [WWW.HSABC.ORG/PAIDSICKLEAVE](http://WWW.HSABC.ORG/PAIDSICKLEAVE).

## CIBONEY MELO

### Why did you join the member engagement team?

I would like to learn about resources and develop new skills to help my worksite create a solid base for member engagement. Our membership is willing to learn all about HSA to make the right decisions at the right time when dealing with workplace matters. I would like to act as the bridge between our members and HSA in a timely matter.

### Why is member engagement important?

It is very important, since members have a voice in the bargaining process. Members should feel protected by their union, and feel like their union is accountable to them. As members all together, we are empowered to advocate for each other and express ourselves freely.



## KANE TSE

### Why is paid sick leave for all good for public health?

People should not have to choose between their health and a pay cheque. Staying home contains the spread of COVID-19 and keeps schools and businesses open, keeps workers employed, and most importantly, protects vulnerable populations and the public health system – our critical tool to combatting it.

### Why did you join the member engagement team?

I joined the member engagement team to learn from other HSA members and staff. These people have the ability to turn a ripple of water into a roaring tide of support. They are leaders who can inspire a group to action, and I want to witness and contribute to it.



## NADINE BLAKE

### How can HSA members get involved with the paid sick leave campaign?

There are quite a few ways for members to get involved in this campaign. They can visit the campaign website to send a letter to the BC government, sign up as a volunteer to help distribute campaign postcards, or join us in phone banking to fellow members.

### Why is member engagement important?

Member engagement at all our HSA worksites is very important. It helps strengthen the union by allowing members to feel part of a larger community. When members are given the opportunity to meet each other and participate in activities collectively, it builds strong relationships and a sense of comradery at our worksites.



## KAREN SANDHU

### Why is paid sick leave for all good for public health?

We've seen that the key to minimizing the spread of COVID-19 is to stay home if you are sick and self-isolate. This is an easy option for workers in professions like ours that have built-in sick banks. We don't have to think twice about this. Unfortunately, the reality is that other frontline workers have a more difficult choice to make. Staying home may mean that they lose a day's pay, which would have a ripple effect on that person and their dependents. However, going into work sick puts us ALL at risk by increasing the possibility of exposure.

### Why is member engagement important?

It's important because having more people aware of their rights in the collective agreement builds a stronger and healthier worksite.





# CONVENTION 2020

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HSA'S HISTORY, ELECTED DELEGATES REPRESENTING CHAPTERS FROM ACROSS THE PROVINCE TOOK TO THEIR COMPUTERS, TABLETS, AND PHONES TO PARTICIPATE IN HSA'S FIRST VIRTUAL CONVENTION, HELD NOV. 16 AND 17.

**BY SAMANTHA PONTING**  
HSA COMMUNICATIONS

For two days, delegates met to set a course of action for the union for the year ahead. They debated resolutions, collaborated regionally, and reviewed the important work of HSA's various committees.

At the onset of the pandemic, HSA was scheduled to host its 49th annual convention at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Vancouver. When it quickly became apparent that an in-person gathering was not in the cards, the event was postponed.

While the virtual platform came with some challenges, HSA delegates stepped up to the task, giving voice to the union's 18,000 members.

A record number of resolutions - 121 - were submitted to this year's convention by the January 25 deadline. The HSA Resolutions Committee worked in February and March to package resolutions together into composite motions and to provide rationales for its recommendations to ensure that delegates could address as many resolutions as possible. Their work prioritizing the order of resolutions for presentation to convention resumed in the lead-up to the rescheduled convention.

Issues discussed at the convention included staff retention and recruitment in health care and social services, including child development services. Delegates called on HSA to

continue its work in exploring strategies for working with employers to address professional shortages, and to continue its lobbying efforts with the provincial government to ensure adequate staffing for the delivery of services.

In another noteworthy motion, HSA received a strong mandate from delegates to take far-reaching and bold action to address the climate emergency. The packaged motion, under Composite 4, brings together the ideas and strategies of 10 chapters, and calls on HSA to develop a climate action plan. With clear steps outlined, the resolution provides direction to HSA that can empower the union to become a leader in the fight for climate justice through collective and individual action.

The motion recognizes that, as a member of the broader labour movement, HSA has valuable opportunities to collaborate provincially and federally. It calls on HSA to work with the BC Federation of Labour to re-launch its Climate Change Committee and to appoint a representative to the National Union of Public General Employees' (NUPGE) National Environment Committee. It calls for a nationally-coordinated investigation into climate action through the collective bargaining process.

Other steps include reducing the organization's ecological footprint through waste reduction measures, and creating opportunities for climate lead-

ership through such measures as developing educational tools for steward teams.

Delegates also debated several changes to the union's constitution aimed at updating the rules of governance.

BC Federation of Labour President Laird Cronk delivered a pre-recorded message to delegates emphasizing the need for solidarity in the work ahead.

"Whether it's improving employment standards, whether it's strengthening the Labour Code and making it fair, whether its occupational health and safety, whether its fighting for social justice and inclusion, whether it's Indigenous rights, it's so important that we're all together," he said. In her closing remarks, HSA President and Convention Chair Val Avery spoke to delegates about HSA's leadership role in changemaking.

"Change is never easy to achieve. It is a lot of grinding and hard work, and HSA is taking on that challenge every day. And I truly believe that we are leaders in so many areas," she said.

She also urged delegates to take care of themselves. "I think it's incredibly important that we stay positive right now in this moment in time, with this pandemic we are facing, which is challenging to both our physical and mental health," she said. "I urge you to take care of yourself and show some kindness to others."



## National Union President celebrates the year's progress

On Day two of the HSA Convention, delegates had the opportunity to hear a video address by Larry Brown, the current president of the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE), the national union to which HSA is affiliated.

While he opened by providing an overview of the challenges across the country, including an attack on health care workers in Alberta, with a four per cent wage roll-back and 11,000 public sector health care jobs on the chopping block, Brown spoke to the “silver linings” that have emerged since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. He expressed hope that emerging out of the pandemic, Canada will adopt a “new normal” that is better for society.

“The old normal was not good enough,” he said. “We need a better normal. A new normal. A more human and equal normal that we can be proud of as Canadians.”

He said that COVID-19 has exposed some of the social problems that have existed long before the pandemic. “As a result of COVID, we’ve really exposed a lot of the cracks and the holes in our system. Our social safety nets are tattered and they need to be rebuilt,” he said.

“The underfunding of health-care has been exposed as the critical mistake that we always knew it was. Inequality has skyrocketed as a result of the COVID pandemic, and we’ve been saying that for years.”

“And now almost everybody is recognizing that we need to really put inequality on the agenda and grapple with it seriously,” exclaimed Brown.

Brown pointed to the public’s new-found appreciation for labour unions as another silver lining from the pandemic. He said that people have started to see unions in “a whole different light.”

“People are lining up to join a union. We have people knocking at our doors across the country saying, ‘we like what we see,’” said Brown. “They see that our members are safer, that our members’ jobs are more protected.”

Brown also expressed enthusiasm for the recent landmark BC court decision involving the Cambie Surgery Centre – a legal win that has been hailed by advocates as a major victory for public healthcare. Following a decade-long legal battle, the court ruled against surgeon Brian Day, who was seeking to invalidate sections of the *Medicare Protection Act*. If successful, the challenge would have eroded crucial protections against health care privatization.

“Another bright silver lining is the Cambie case. We won this major victory defending

Medicare against the attack of the for-profit corporations,” he said.

Brown praised the work of union activists, under the leadership of HSA President Val Avery, who have made progress at the national level around occupational health and safety. “We have actually gotten the Canadian health system to recognize openly that COVID can be spread by aerosols, not just by droplets. That was a huge victory.”

Brown expressed his gratitude to all the HSA members who have been working in service of the public throughout the COVID-19 crisis.

“I imagine, like health care workers across the country, you’re probably exhausted, you’re probably stressed out, you’re probably feeling the effects of eight months of an unrelenting battle against this COVID disease,” he said.

“And I want to really thank you for the incredible job you’ve done. You’ve laid yourselves on the line for the people of your province and you deserve a tremendous amount of gratitude for that. And I have to tell you, I am really proud to say that I am your national representative,” declared Brown.

He congratulated HSA on its release of its survey on the topic of racism and discrimination experienced by members, and reported that unions across the country are following in HSA’s footsteps to ask the hard questions and set a path forward.

NUPGE PRESIDENT LARRY BROWN



NOVEMBER 20, 2020

# TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

**HSA REMEMBERS AND GRIEVES THE LIVES THAT HAVE BEEN LOST TO ANTI-TRANSGENDER VIOLENCE. WE HOLD SPACE FOR THE BEAUTY AND RESILIENCE OF TRANS LIVES.**



## HONOURING AN OH&S CHAMPION

**BY SAMANTHA PONTING**  
HSA COMMUNICATIONS

EVERY YEAR, THE HSA OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY (OH&S) COMMITTEE AWARDS THE DAVID BLAND AWARD TO AN HSA MEMBER WHO HAS DEMONSTRATED LEADERSHIP TO IMPROVE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY AT THEIR WORKSITE AND BEYOND.

The award was established in 2007 and honours the memory of David Bland, a vocational counsellor and HSA member from Richmond Mental Health who was killed at work by a former client. His death is an important reminder to take action to prevent workplace

violence.

This year's recipient of the David Bland Memorial Award is Christine Ambrose. Ambrose has displayed an outstanding commitment to increasing physical and psychological health and safety across her chapter at the Queen Alexandra Centre for Children's Health (QACCH), where she works as a supported child development consultant.

"I was watching the live stream of the HSA convention and I was absolutely shocked when I heard [HSA President] Val Avery begin to speak about the award and my OH&S work at Queen Alexandra," said Ambrose.

"I feel so honoured to be rec-

ognized for this work, much of it off the side of my desk. But it could not be done without the excellent steward team we have at Queen Alexandra supporting each other and our members. Their hard work, encouragement and dedication has driven me forward when the work seems overwhelming, emotionally difficult and slow," she said. She also thanked the staff team at HSA for their support, and thanked HSA for the award.

Ambrose is a long-time labour activist with HSA, and currently serves as OH&S steward, co-chair of the Joint Occupational Health and Safety (JOHS) Committee, chief steward, member-at-large, and Victoria Labour Council delegate.

With hard work and dedication, Ambrose has advocated for her co-workers on a variety of complex OH&S issues, including workplace violence and physical environment hazards. Her collaborative and strategic approach has resulted in tangible gains at her worksite, including the creation of a JOHS sub-committee at Ledger House Inpatient Child and Youth Mental Health Program. This step forward has created the space for HSA members in the program to be actively involved in the prevention and mitigation of occupational health and safety risks unique to their program.

“OH&S work takes lots of time and persistence, and often there is no quick fix. It is keeping the important safety issues that affect our members on the JOHS Committee table, going back to the regulations, and never giving up that brings the safety changes, goals and results that we want to see for our members,” she said.

According to Ambrose’s co-worker and Occupational Therapist Teresa Winberg-Phillips, Ambrose is a “caring spirit” who is always thinking about the wellness of her co-workers.

“Christine is always reminding us to go for a walk, take a break, eat healthy, and stop looking at screens so much – not just for our own health,



DAVID BLAND AWARD WINNER CHRISTINE AMBROSE AT HSA'S 2018 REGION 2 MEETING.

but to be the best for our clients. She’s increased all of our awareness of health and safety and is a true leader by example.”

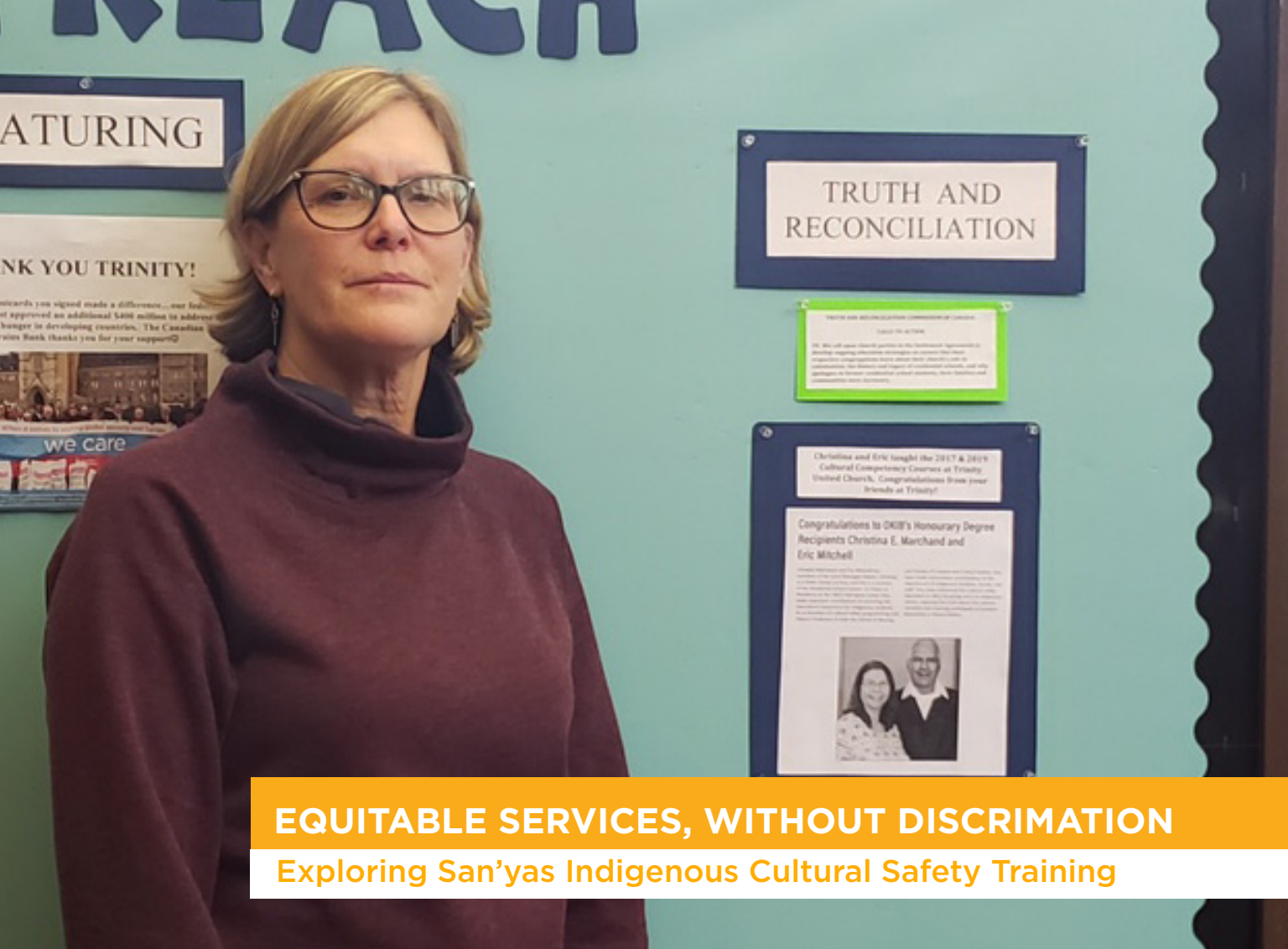
Physiotherapist Victoria MacAulay, who works alongside Ambrose in AQCCH’s School Age Program, said Ambrose promotes self-care and educates her co-workers about how to reduce mental, emotional, and physical stress.

“Christine lends a listening ear to her office mates when we need to debrief on difficult conversations, dealing with direct or secondary trauma or violence prevention. She is a great resource and mentor,” she said.

“Christine is always reminding us to go for a walk, take a break, eat healthy, and stop looking at screens so much – not just for our own health, but to be the best for our clients.”

- CO-WORKER  
TERESA WINBERG-PHILLIPS





## EQUITABLE SERVICES, WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION

### Exploring San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training

**BY SAMANTHA PONTING**  
HSA COMMUNICATIONS

IN 2006, THE FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL AND THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA ENTERED INTO A BILATERAL AGREEMENT CALLED THE TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE ACCORD: FIRST NATIONS HEALTH PLAN.

The accord outlined 29 action items designed to address some of the health inequities between Indigenous peoples and other British Columbians. Action item 19 mandated the development of a cultural competency curriculum for the health authorities.

From 2008-2009, Dr. Cheryl Ward (Kwakwaka'wakw) and Leslie Varley (Nisga'a), then the director of the Indigenous

Health Program at the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA), developed the acclaimed San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training Program.

Ward, now the executive director of Indigenous Health for PHSA and a long-standing advocate against anti-Indigenous racism in the health system, said that she has always felt driven to engage in anti-racism and social justice work. "I have always felt compelled to do this work, and that is reflected in my career," she said.

"Issues connected to social justice, inequity, racism and discrimination, and our shared experience of colonization have motivated me to be an actionist. This work is important and meaningful," asserted Ward.

According to the training website, "Cultural safety is about

fostering a climate where the unique history of Indigenous peoples is recognized and respected in order to provide appropriate care and services in an equitable and safe way, without discrimination."

Since its implementation in 2010, the training has expanded to Ontario and Manitoba, training over 130,000 people across Canada. Tailored trainings are now offered for workers in British Columbia in the health, mental health, child welfare, and justice fields, including training for Indigenous-only participants working in health care.

The training is a first of its kind in the country, and offers a valuable opportunity to gain knowledge and skills that can fundamentally inform practice. It is offered free to employees of PHSA, Providence Health

Rainer, who has been an occupational therapist since 1985, said the course changed parts of her practice. “It gave me tools for working with First Nations peoples who I come across in my work.”

Care, and the five regional health authorities.

The course has had a profound impact on HSA members such as Joanna Rainer.

“It was one of the most well-designed courses that I’ve ever taken,” said Rainer, who praised the course’s integration of readings, videos, and diagrams.

Rainer, who has been an occupational therapist since 1985, said the course changed parts of her practice. “It gave me tools for working with First Nations peoples who I come across in my work.” Rainer works for Community Care Health Services for Interior Health in Vernon, and sometimes visits the Okanagan Indian Band reserve in her role as an OT.

“The course prompted me to use the services of the patient navigator more often and more regularly,” explained Rainer. “We are very fortunate at Vernon Jubilee Hospital to have a patient navigator, Diana Moore, who helps to support First Nations people through the healthcare system.”

“Often she might know the family and might have some helpful things to either pass on to me, or know the best way to offer services to that person. She might even accompany me on the home visit,” said Rainer.

“The course also prompted me to ask questions of the client and the family about how they would feel about me coming to their home, and who they would like to be there.”

She said the course taught her a lot about First Nations history in BC, and the history of colonization. “It’s important to know the history, both the good and the bad.”

“I became aware that some of the things that I do might be triggering. Even just being a white person coming into their

home.”

Ward said that there are multiple barriers and challenges facing Indigenous peoples when accessing health care, such as geographic issues and access to transportation.

“Other challenges are related to history and in particular the way that Indigenous nations and communities have and continue to experience colonialism and the legacy of anti-Indigenous racism.”

Anti-Indigenous racism on a systemic level continues to impact Indigenous interactions

with the health care system and other institutions. Just this past June, provincial child advocate and former judge Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond was appointed by Health Minister Adrian Dix to lead an independent investigation into racism in BC’s health system.

And in August, HSA released a report on workplace racism, which included written accounts from HSA members about anti-Indigenous racism towards staff, patients, and clients in HSA workplaces.

“Interpersonal, organizational,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

DR. CHERYL WARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF INDIGENOUS HEALTH, PROVINCIAL HEALTH SERVICES AUTHORITY



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

and systemic racism is a pervasive and ongoing reality for Indigenous people across Canada. The legacy of anti-Indigenous racism has been hard wired into our society, and as a result it manifests in virtually all of our social systems.”

“This dynamic manifests in the form of attitudes and behaviours that inform the treatment of Indigenous Peoples which inevitably lead to varying degrees of harm. These attitudes and behaviours are a major barrier to receiving health care and other services that are free of bias, stereotyping and discrimination,” said Ward.

### Addressing anti-Indigenous racism

Rainer encourages her colleagues to take advantage of the San’yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training Program. She believes that supervisors should allow the training to take part during work hours.

She said that when it comes to cultural competency, education is a good place to start. “We are just so ignorant of First Nations’ history and the impact that colonization has had on First Nations people, and why we are in the mess we’re in.”

She said the course also in-

“It is not for want of a clearly defined path to guide us in moving toward transforming our relationships,” said Ward. “Rather, the issue we really need to face is one of creating and sustaining enthusiasm, motivation, and commitment.”

spired her to take action on a local level.

When the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission were released, she engaged with other members of her church congregation in Vernon to implement Call to Action 59, which calls on church parties to develop organizational strategies to educate congregations about the church’s role in colonization and the legacy of residential schools.

Ward said that various commissions and mandates – such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples – have clearly established the

need for a cultural shift in the relationship between settlers/immigrants and Indigenous peoples.

“So, it is not for want of a clearly defined path to guide us in moving toward transforming our relationships,” said Ward. “Rather, the issue we really need to face is one of creating and sustaining enthusiasm, motivation, and commitment.”

“Systems do not always change because it is the right thing to do. Typically, systems shift when it becomes ‘necessary’ and they are compelled to do so.”

Ward emphasized the importance of confronting and disrupting anti-Indigenous racism openly when witnessed.

“Whether this is something that you witness while walking on the street or shopping in a store, or whether you witness it in a health care setting, people need to take action by naming the behaviour, standing up for the person who is targeted, and interrupting the harm.”

She said that this can act as a “powerful deterrent.”

“Racism and discrimination thrive in environments where it is tolerated; when we no longer tolerate the mistreatment of Indigenous people as a society, we will be transformed.

COMMUNITY CARE HEALTH SERVICES IN VERNON, BC.





# MAKING SENSE OF THE MPP REDESIGN

BY DENNIS BLATCHFORD

HSA'S PENSIONS AND BENEFITS ADVOCATE ANSWERS COMMON QUESTIONS RELATED TO PENSIONS.

**I have reviewed the pension plan's redesign website, and as someone in mid-career, I am disappointed that early retirement benefits are being eliminated under these proposals. I feel it isn't fair that I may need to work longer because of these new rules. I don't understand why the rewards for long service and dedication are being taken away. Can you explain?**

With regards to long service and dedication, the Municipal Pension Plan (MPP) will still reward long service after this re-set. In fact, these proposals strengthen some of the features that provide long-term value for plan members.

But first, as you describe your situation (mid-career), I'm relatively confident that you will make up some differences from the improved accrual rate - in effect, the pension benefit paid - going forward. The improved accrual rate will build your guaranteed basic pension faster than under current rules.

That will give you a more secure lifetime benefit, which should help mitigate over time what the short-term bridge

benefits provide under current plan rules. It should also be remembered that once inflation increases are granted to your basic pension, they become part of your guaranteed pension going forward. That translates to real income security as you move to your senior years.

**So even with the removal of the bridge benefit for early retirement, I can still benefit from these changes?**

Yes, I encourage you to take these reforms as a whole to appreciate the full value going forward. Part of the value proposition for pensions is how much they cost. For someone mid-career, the improvements to the rate stabilization account alone should not go unnoticed in considering the impact for you.

Having a hedge against rising contribution rates is money in your pocket during your working years. These reforms will ensure plan affordability for years to come, which crosses every demographic in the MPP pension journey.

Contribution rates will be particularly important as you get nearer and nearer to planning your retirement and moving to the next stage of your life. Rate stabilization is significantly improved in the plan's redesign, lessening the likelihood of significant contribution increases as you finish out your career.

Turning back to inflation increases, these reforms are important to you for two reasons. Firstly, these reforms will ensure there will be inflation protection for you when you retire in 10 or 15 years. These reforms ensure there will be intergenerational equity in the plan, which should be comforting news for all active plan members.

Secondly, the inflation adjustment account is geared to provide long term inflation protection for your expected decades in retirement. By way of example, a pension drawn at the turn of the century had increased by 45% by 2020 due to granted annual inflation increases.

Lastly, in addition to improved income security in retirement, these reforms include a significantly better health and welfare platform going forward. Structured under federal legislation, the Employee Life and Health Trust (ELHT) model is designed to provide more stability and certainty in the delivery of health and welfare benefits to beneficiaries.

I can say with a lot of certainty that these improvements will be very important to you as you approach retirement, and during your expected three decades in retirement.

**To learn more about the changes proposed to the Municipal Pension Plan, visit: [www.mppredesign.ca](http://www.mppredesign.ca).**

If you have a question or concern about pensions, contact [dblatchford@hsabc.org](mailto:dblatchford@hsabc.org).

# ENHANCING BELONGING AND INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE WITH INTENTION

**BY TRISTYN KELLNER**  
HSA MEMBER

When thinking about Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) and Joint Occupational Health and Safety (JOHS) Committee duties, the average person most likely thinks about managing physical injuries and biological hazards. Chemical safety sheets might come to mind. If you are especially creative, you may think about ergonomics and safety inspections, or mental health in the workplace.

When pressed to list duties of JOHS Committee representatives, it is safe to say that many people would not immediately consider ensuring diversity and inclusion. However, these topics are becoming more prominent in the foreground of conversations, especially when related to psychological and mental health and safety in the workplace.

As an active member of our JOHS Committee at the non-profit community service organization Open Door Group, I participate in meetings on a monthly basis and contribute to the ongoing assessment of safety concerns, like those listed above.

I was given an opportunity through HSA to attend this year's Bottom Line Conference, hosted virtually by the Canadian Mental Health Association in early October. The confer-

ence theme, "Dismantling Barriers, Opening Doors: Inclusion at Work," explored how one's sense of belonging can affect workplace psychological health and safety. We heard from a variety of speakers at the conference, but the common lesson was that not feeling included at work could lead to negative mental health symptoms, burn-out, higher stress levels, and feelings of discomfort or a lack of safety at work.

Through a variety of workshops and presentations over the course of two days, I was given the opportunity to more deeply analyze my own workplace, and consider how to enhance a sense of belonging and inclusion within our team.

Diversity and inclusion have become particularly hot button topics over the last few years, both on JOHS committees and within the workplace in general. It is important to recognize that diversity is more than just a human resources issue that arises in hiring practices.

Every individual in the workplace comes from their own unique background and experiences the world uniquely. Inclusion means recognizing and respecting the differences in culture, gender expression, race, sexuality, physical health, mental health, and more. It also means learning to call out others when they are inappro-

priately harassing someone or being discriminatory.

It is important to note that recognizing differences in the workplace includes considering how these differences impact our positions in the workplace, as well as the differing power dynamics and barriers that can come from them. Even if working in similar positions, two people from different backgrounds can experience their jobs completely differently due to past experiences, as well as current barriers such as discrimination, negative bias, or social circumstances outside of work.

As a JOHS Committee representative, or simply an HSA member, it is important to consider your own practice and workplace: Is the team including everyone equally? Are you creating an environment where everyone can be the best versions of themselves and bring their whole selves to the workplace?

Common examples of discrimination and harassment can include inappropriate jokes in break/lunch rooms, micro-aggressions, or the denial of experiences that are different from yours. It is important to examine the statements that you have heard before and just "let pass." Even the smallest jokes and statements can build a team foundation that is exclusionary, and can lead to a workplace that allows harass-

ment and bullying.

In my own practice as a member of the JOHS Committee, as well as in my work as a vocational counsellor in the Downtown Eastside in Vancouver, I have always valued the diverse group of people I work with, both as my coworkers and clients.

I continue to challenge myself and those within my workplace to embrace diversity and pursue additional training on topics such as decolonization, racism, LGBT2Q+ awareness, mental health, etc. I feel fortunate to be a member of a union that values these topics and has provided training in both decolonization and anti-racism this year, as well as mental health in the workplace.

The best tool to create a more inclusive workplace is to be educated and aware of the biases we carry, and to be intentional about breaking them down and making changes for the future, even if we have made mistakes in the past. If formal training is not a possibility in your workplace, there are endless resources online to pursue in your own time in order to educate yourself and examine your biases.

In addition to training, team members or JOSH Committee representatives can be intentional in our conversations and work with others, and put more effort into including folks we may have been unintentionally excluding or devaluing. Here are some easy ways to do this:

- Have a conversation with someone who you haven't spoken with very often, and ask them questions about their experiences if they are willing to share.
- Ask people how they are doing, and genuinely mean it when you ask. Make sure to take the time to listen to their answer.

Embracing diversity and including everyone in the workplace

“Our office consists of a wide array of workers, some whom have just begun their careers, and others who bring years of work experience into the field. Regardless of where we are in our careers, these changes ensure that we as workers are set up for future security.”

is an important duty of everyone, not just members of the JOSH Committee. If we all take a little time to recognize the gaps in our own knowledge about those with different experiences, and spend just a few extra minutes to take the time to learn more, our workplaces would most likely feel a little safer and more cohesive.

Even though I am only one member of a larger team, I am proud of the work I am doing and look forward to continuing to embrace the wide variety of people I get to work with each day.

HSA MEMBER AND VOCATIONAL COUNSELLOR TRISTYN KELLNER



# EXPANDING KNOWLEDGE AND BUILDING CONFIDENCE THROUGH THE YOUNG WORKERS' FORUM

At the Young Workers Forum in November, Young Workers' Advisory Committee Co-Chair Karen Sandhu connected with forum participant Brooke Madsen. The two were surprised to learn that they both worked at Vancouver General Hospital – Sandhu as an electromyography technologist and Madsen as a respiratory therapist – and were each elected occupational health and safety (OH&S) stewards.

It was the third year that HSA has hosted the Young Workers' Forum – this time, virtually.

“Despite losing that in-person connection piece, we were able to connect on issues that affect both our professions, including classifications, wage disparity, and occupational health and safety (OH&S) in the workplace,” said Sandhu. Sandhu interviewed Madsen about her experience with the forum, the challenges facing young respiratory therapists, and Madsen’s hopes surrounding her new role as an OH&S steward.

**Sandhu: Hey Brooke! It was nice connecting with you through the forum. I understand that this was the first HSA session you've attended. What attracted you to it?**

**Madsen:** I got the email from HSA and I was attracted to the word “young.” I clicked on the link and soon realized it was a specialized workshop geared to young workers. As I am a young worker newer to unionized work, I was drawn to the forum. I was seeking more information about my union rights and how I could highlight my profession as a respiratory therapist and have our voices heard.

**Sandhu: How was your experience?**

**Madsen:** Overall, I really enjoyed the programming. There was quite the variety of sessions, ranging on topics from an introduction to the union, labour history, anti-racism, finding solidarity in the workplace, and OH&S.

**Sandhu: What are some of the key learnings or takeaways you have from the forum?**

**Madsen:** Personally, I really

enjoyed the sessions on OH&S. It was also really informative to have a session on union processes, which covered how proposals are properly written for chapter meetings and annual convention, and how resolutions occur.

I knew that chapter meetings and annual conferences were happening, but I never really knew what occurred during the meetings. Now, if I have something to discuss during a chapter meeting, I will be more prepared.

During the forum we also brainstormed with other young HSA workers in breakout sessions. I found these very interesting and was able to gain invaluable insights into occupational health and safety from different examples of incidents involving young workers. I learned how to take action around workplace incidents.

In our breakout sessions, we were also able to share ideas and recommendations to the union on ways to support young workers. We talked about amplifying social media content to highlight all the dif-

ELECTROMYOGRAPHY TECHNOLOGIST AND CO-CHAIR OF THE YOUNG WORKERS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE KAREN SANDHU.





I learned that, as important as it is to have your voice heard with regards to workplace changes, there are clear pathways that we can use to take action and effect change for our professions. It is important to get involved!”

ferent professions in HSA, and creating an easier-to-navigate email or phone hotline for young workers. Young workers could call or email if they had questions surrounding OH&S, their rights, or solidarity in the workplace.

**Sandhu: Would you recommend this forum, and if so, why? What do you want fellow young workers to know?**

**Madsen:** I would highly recommend this forum to young workers. We all pay our union dues, but until I engaged in this forum it wasn't exactly clear to me what I was effectively paying for.

I now feel more confident in my ability to source information and utilize tools regarding conflict in the workplace. I learned that, as important as it is to have your voice heard with regards to workplace changes, there are clear pathways that we can use to take action and effect change for our professions. It is important to get involved!

**Sandhu: As young workers, we face unique challenges. What are some of the challenges you are facing as a young worker in your field?**

**Madsen:** Things are of course extra stressful working on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic. Being faced with these unprecedented circumstances just two years following the completion of my respiratory therapy education has certainly posed many challenges.

The pandemic has added a risk of burnout at work in the hospital, and we have all had to take extra steps to ensure we maintain appropriate work-life balance. However, being a young worker with so many

experienced and supportive co-workers has made things easier. Aside from this, I think the main challenges facing young workers relate to experience and being informed. Sessions such as the HSA Young Workers' Forum are essential for helping us stay informed.

**Sandhu: What's an issue that you think is important for young workers in the union to learn about?**

**Madsen:** If you have a question regarding any type of OH&S issue within your workplace, whether it's regarding the chemicals you use for your job, the personal protective equipment you use, conflicts that occur, emotional or physical stress, or trauma from your job, you have the right to discuss it with your union rep and are entitled to working in a safe workplace.

The respiratory therapy community is full of wonderful people and leaders, but sometimes it is hard to have conversations about OH&S with our co-workers and direct supervisors. I think it is important for young workers to realize how valuable

of a resource HSA is and that they are always there to support us when needed.

**Sandhu: That's great. You mentioned that you signed up to become an OH&S steward. What do you hope to do in this new role?**

**Madsen:** One of the biggest takeaways from the forum was the importance of being informed. As a steward I would love to take a key role in ensuring my peers are informed on important topics concerning occupational health and safety.

RESPIRATORY THERAPIST AND HSA MEMBER BROOKE MADSEN



# SUPPORTING SOCIAL ACTION IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Every year, HSA provides financial support through the union’s Committee for Equality and Social Action (CESA) Fund to dozens of organizations doing social and environmental justice work. In the fall, HSA members-at-large and board directors sitting on the Committee for Equality and Social Action (CESA) review applications to the fund, and distribute monies in accordance with the fund’s mandate and principles. This year, HSA’s CESA highlights the work of two incredible organizations that have made a difference in the communities they serve. HSA is proud to support their work.

## TOGETHER AGAINST POVERTY SOCIETY (TAPS)

When workers without union representation have their basic workplace rights violated, TAPS is one of the few organizations they can turn to for support. Through its Employment Standards Legal Advocacy Project, TAPS provides free legal advice and representation to workers seeking recourse when their employer has violated employment standards, and assists workers in filing complaints with the Employment Standards Branch.

Serving Southern Vancouver Island and the Southern Gulf Islands, TAPS also provides much needed advocacy and assistance regarding applications and appeals for disability benefits, income assistance, employment insurance, and, in 2020, the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). It also provides valuable support to tenants engaged in residential tenancy disputes. With limited resources, TAPS provides services to approximately 7,000 people in Victoria and the surrounding area every year.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit, TAPS says demands for their services has never been higher. Mass layoffs have meant more and more workers have needed help accessing income supports and defending workplace rights.

The work of TAPS is not limited to legal advocacy. It raises awareness for workers’ rights through public education and advocates for legislative reforms that enhance workers’ rights in BC.

## UNION PROTEIN PROJECT

The Union Protein Project (UPP) is a charity that fundraises to subsidize food bank purchases of canned tuna, salmon, and peanut butter. It was founded in 2006 by the United Way and labour unions, and works with more than 75 BC food banks and community food hubs. Expansion to Alberta is underway.

Central aims of the Union Protein Project are to support the supply of protein-rich foods on food bank shelves, and to amplify the contributions of labour unions to the community. This year to date, UPP has provided more than \$1.5 million (retail value) of protein products to food bank clients.

The Union Protein Project’s moto is, “Food Security Through Good Jobs.” Inadequate labour standards that permit low-wage and precarious work are major causes of food insecurity, increasing demands on food banks. Many food bank clients are low-wage workers and children living below the poverty line.

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE UNION PROTEIN PROJECT, OR TO MAKE A DONATION, VISIT: [WWW.PROTEINPROJECT.CA](http://WWW.PROTEINPROJECT.CA).**

**YOU CAN BECOME A MEMBER OF TAPS, MAKE A DONATION, SUBSCRIBE TO THEIR NEWSLETTER, AND ACCESS EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AT: [WWW.TAPSB.CA](http://WWW.TAPSB.CA).**





## BENSON HO

### HSA STAFF PROFILE

**Job title and department:** Organizer, Strategic Communications and Member Development

**What you actually do, in your own words:** I work with chapters throughout the province to build steward teams, increase engagement in local chapters, and increase broader engagement with the union. And I help non-unionized employees go through the various steps needed in order to have the opportunity to become HSA members.

**Your favourite part about the job:** Being able to connect with members. I am continually inspired by the work our members do, and I get to see the profound difference they make to our public health care system.

**Your loved ones describe you as:** Someone who has an adventurous, multi-faceted side that likes to get out and explore in unconventional ways. Empathetic, compassionate, loyal, with a great sense of justice and fairness.

**Secret talent unrelated to job:** I know how to build propane-powered flame effects, like a cannon that can shoot flames and empty a propane tank in a matter of minutes.

**Go-to song for an energy boost:** "Gone" by Dierks Bentley.

**If you could be famous for anything, what would you choose:** Creating something that makes a positive impact on people's lives.

**Best place you've ever visited and why:** West Virginia – the beautiful Appalachian Mountains are so full of beauty, history and friendly, down-to-earth people. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to live there for a short time and look forward to every chance I get to let that country road take me back to the place where I really do feel like I belong.

**Literary, TV or movie character most inspiring to you:** Coach Taylor, Friday Night Lights (TV Series)

**Your perfect day looks like:** Exploring a dirt road in the middle of nowhere, stopping to enjoy the views, and going on a hike to explore. I'd get out the fishing poles and the chainsaws and would end up sitting around a campfire with good friends, having great conversations and singing along to our favourite country songs.

**What solidarity means to you:** A communal effort where we all come together to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and equitably, and support those who may be experiencing a bump along the road.



# HEALTH SCIENCES ASSOCIATION

## The union delivering modern health care

HSA's Board of Directors is elected by members to run HSA between annual conventions. Members should feel free to contact them with any concerns.

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*HSA recognizes the intersections between public health care and social services and Indigenous rights, noting that structural violence against Indigenous peoples in Canada, including historic and ongoing colonialism, impacts Indigenous peoples' equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, the right to access, without discrimination, all social and health services, and the right to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices (as outlined in Article 24, United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples).*



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