

JOINT MEMO



To: *Employer and Union Strategic Nurse Staffing Committee (SNSC) members
Patient Care Staffing Assessment (PCA) Process members
Leaders and front-line staff*

From: *Michael McMillan, President & CEO, HEABC
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Subject: *Provincial SNSC and PCA Process: Joint Discussion Day*

The second Provincial SNSC joint discussion day between employer and union members took place on November 27, 2019. Regional teams gathered across the province and were connected by video conferencing. This approach was intentional as we are committed to developing our collective skills to meet across distance, building working relationships, and continuing the investment in strategic discussions to make important change.

Given the complex work that is currently underway on Article 60 - Direct Patient Care Staffing and Article 28.04 - Working Short Premium, participation was broadened to include BCNU elected regional chairs, as well as the health authority (HA) / Providence Health Care (PHC) Chief Nursing Officers and Leads for the Patient Care Staffing Assessment (PCA) Process project. Each regional discussion was hosted by the SNSC co-chairs and joined by a provincial pair (a BCNU and HEABC member) who acted as co-facilitators; a lead facilitator guided the overall structure of the meeting as the conversation moved back and forth between a regional and provincial focus.

Where we focused our discussion

The purpose of the SNSC is to consult on nurse workforce planning trends, activities and initiatives, as well as organizational approaches to long-term and short-term staffing needs. This reflects a move to a more strategic approach to conversations between health employers and unions, which requires well-functioning relationships.

Therefore, the focus of our morning discussion was on outlining and reviewing the strategic intent of the SNSC: What's working? And what's not?

- How does the SNSC and its attention to the broader strategic picture offer value and impact to the system and to frontline staff?
- How does this strategic body continue to develop over time and maintain links to time-sensitive issues?
- What are some of the successes, challenges and trends that have been identified so far?
- How is information being communicated locally and provincially, and how are we celebrating successes and communicating change?
- How can we improve our discussions, our communication and our impact?

The afternoon discussion focused on reviewing the collaborative development and implementation of the PCA Process and tools and the importance of getting on the same page and making decisions about next steps.

- What areas of diversity in tool and process development have been identified and how can we work together in order to learn from each other and meet regional differences?
- How do the SNSC, PCA Process and professional responsibility intersect and how do we maintain dialogue between union and employer partners in order to best understand concerns and implementation challenges?

High-level discussion themes from the day

Bridge building

- The SNSC, which replaced the Nurse Relations Committee, is a positive evolution in creating a template for success; reports of a growing sense of trust between employer and union members were heard.
- There are many ways to continue to improve how we do this work together through a stronger, collaborative relationship.
- In order to successfully build this relationship, the PCA Process development must be transparent and collaborative.

Improving communication

- Some participants expressed frustration with the timeliness, clarity and filtering of joint communications.
- Communication strategies must be developed to successfully relay mutual good intentions and reinforce the strategic provincial discussion.
- The SNSC is a vehicle to share good work, celebrate successes and communicate staffing changes; communicate promptly and frequently.
- Consideration should be given to the specific requirements outlined in the Collective Agreement for SNSC reporting templates and options for a more condensed approach.

Enhancing connection

- This work matters; we need to work collaboratively and talk/meet often.
- Success requires regular meetings and for the right people to attend and come prepared.

Keeping up the momentum

- Our ability to work together and to focus on complex contributing factors is essential to making a difference.
- Each SNSC will continue to meet bi-monthly (or more regularly) to work on nurse staffing workforce planning trends, activities and initiatives as well as organizational approaches to long-term and shortterm staffing.
- Each SNSC will continue its work to address nurse workforce planning and issues from a strategic perspective.
- SNSC co-chairs are asked to submit meeting reports, formal minutes and joint communications to the NSS team in a timely manner. HEABC and BCNU are reviewing the administration process with a view to streamlining it in accordance with employer requests.

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- HEABC and BCNU are compiling a Q&A document based on questions captured during the day.
- NBA and HEABC will host the next Provincial SNSC meeting on March 2, 2020.

Key take-away messages from the SNSC and PCA Process discussion day

- 1. The SNSC is the local forum for the employer and union to discuss trends, issues and initiatives related to strategic nurse workforce staffing and planning.**
- 2. Aspects of the SNSC work are inter-connected and linked to other bodies of work such as the PCA Process.**
- 3. The PCA Process demands greater structure and a fundamental shift in both the employer and unions' approach to collaboration; the approach and relationship are both critical elements essential to ensuring safe patient care staffing.**