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B.C. nurses vote 98.2% in favour of strike action

Lauren Collins

B. C. nurses have voted overwhelmingly in favour of job action.

The B.C.Nurses Union released the results of the May 8 to 11 strike vote on Tuesday (May 12), showing 98.2 per cent of the more than 50,000 nurses voted in favour of a strike. The release notes that it's the strongest strike mandate in the union's history.

While a strike vote doesn't mean guaranteed job action by union members, it gives the union the legal authority to do so.

"This vote is a defining moment," B.C.Nurses' Union president Adriane Gear said. "Nurses across British Columbia are demanding the respect, safety and fair contract they deserve."

The strike vote came after the union declared on April 20 that bargaining was at an impasse after six months.

The union says that during that time, the Nurses' Bargaining Association put forward many solutions to address the quality of patient care that British Columbians receive, only to see the majority of those proposals rejected by the Health Employers Association of BC.

"Nurses need a contract that respects the critical role they play in keeping this healthcare system running," Gear said. "This is about securing the best possible contract that will retain and recruit the nurses the system needs now and in the future. Now is not the time to take away from nurses."

The impasse followed a recent ruling from arbitrator Vince Ready regarding massage therapy benefits.

An April 20 B.C.Nurses' Union email obtained by Black Press Media says that Ready's decision threatens the benefits that members rely on. His ruling directs that massage therapy coverage for plan members and their dependents be capped at $1,427 in 2027 and $1,145 in 2028. Subsequent limits to the massage therapy reimbursements would be determined based upon actuarial calculations.

The email also says the cap will likely continue to decrease over time.

The union added that there would be no immediate changes before a new plan model is implemented Jan. 1, 2027.

B.C. Nurses Union president Adriane Gear, here seen in Vancouver in 2023 when she was vice-president, says nurses have voted overwhelmingly in favour of job action following a strike vote May 8 to 11, 2026. (Lauren Collins/Black Press Media file photo)
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