



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWS RELEASE

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October 5, 2007

Bill 29 talks: Government must change course on contracting out to protect seniors, patients

The provincial government has an historic opportunity to address the growing crisis in seniors' and patient care by reviewing its position on contracting out, say unions representing 40,000 health care workers in talks with government on *Bill 29*.

But Hospital Employees' Union secretary-business manager Judy Darcy says that it appears to be business-as-usual for government on contracting out, despite a four-month - old court ruling striking down provisions of *Bill 29* that enabled the practice – and mounting evidence that contracting out is undermining care for seniors and patients.

Darcy speaks for the Facilities Bargaining Association – the multi-union bargaining association that just wrapped up its first week of talks with government representatives on the implementation of last June's Supreme Court of Canada ruling on *Bill 29*.

“The recent revelations around Beacon Hill Villa – not to mention the Supreme Court ruling – should be a wake-up call to government that *Bill 29*-related contracting out has failed seniors and patients,” says Darcy.

“But after three days of talks, government has maintained that health employers must continue to have the right to layoff health care staff and contract out their work.

“That's a disappointing and inadequate response to a problem that should be addressed in our *Bill 29* talks,” says Darcy. “Health care workers have the right to expect that government and health employers won't continue to run roughshod over their rights.

“And all British Columbians have the right to expect that health care will improve as a result of the Supreme Court decision on *Bill 29*. Maintaining the status quo on contracting out – a practice that's led to the loss of thousands of skilled, experienced workers – is just not acceptable.”

The FBA has asked government to disclose a number of documents related to contracting out so that the parties can examine how the practice has impacted health care services.

The Supreme Court of Canada struck down three sections of *Bill 29* – including one that allowed health employers to side step contracting out protections in health care collective agreements – after a five-year legal challenge by health unions.

The court suspended its declaration for one year so that government could deal with the repercussions of the ruling. Discussions continue next week.

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