



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWSLETTER

PLEASE POST

Bill 29 talks underway Tuesday

The Hospital Employees' Union and its union bargaining partners in the Facilities Bargaining Association (FBA) will sit down later today with government and employer representatives to begin talks on the implementation of the Supreme Court of Canada decision striking down parts of *Bill 29*.

On June 8, the Court declared that three sections of the 2002 contract-breaking legislation violated the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* but suspended their declaration for a period of one year so that government could deal with the repercussions of the decision.

The unions will be seeking the restoration of members' collective bargaining rights and redress for workers affected by *Bill 29*.

"I expect that we have some tough negotiations ahead of us," says HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy. "But we also have an important opportunity to find solutions that both respect our members' fundamental rights and strengthen health care for all British Columbians."

Darcy says members should watch the union website for updates on the *Bill 29* talks.

Today's meeting is the first between the FBA, and government and health employers. A preliminary meeting between government and all health care bargaining associations was held in early September.

At that time, government committed itself to a process of consultation and negotiation that could extend to the end of the year, or longer if sufficient progress is made.

During this process, there will be no involuntary layoffs as a result of contracting out by health authorities or their affiliates covered by the current facilities collective agreement.

And the expected layoff of 66 positions at MSA Hospital in Abbotsford in plant maintenance and food services resulting from the opening of the new P3 hospital will also be put on hold, pending the outcome of the process.

Procurement documents for hospital P3 projects in the Okanagan, Surrey and Victoria issued in the last few weeks also contain clauses binding health authorities to the terms of any future agreements or legislation related to the implementation of *Bill 29* that affect members' jobs.

But government representatives said that they will not declare a moratorium on layoffs related to the flipping of commercial contracts in long-term care.

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