



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

# NEWS RELEASE

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## HEU repeats call for moratorium on Bill 29 layoffs as another 30 care staff terminated

*Abbotsford nursing home operator flips subcontract for care services bringing the number of care staff laid off in six weeks to nearly 700*

Health care workers employed by Abby Therapeutic Services at MSA Manor in Abbotsford are being laid off just two weeks after they joined a union and one week after the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the contracting out provisions of Bill 29.

The Hospital Employees' Union calls it more evidence that government inaction on Bill 29 is causing a serious crisis in seniors' care.

And the union says the premier's refusal to establish a moratorium on Bill 29-related layoffs is sending the wrong message to health employers who continue to flip contracts, fire staff and disrupt care, despite the June 8 ruling by the nation's highest court.

"How much more damage will Bill 29 inflict on health care before this government acts to protect seniors from the chronic contract flipping made possible by this illegal legislation?" says HEU assistant secretary-business manager Zorica Bosancic.

"It's time for the premier to rethink his previous position and institute an immediate moratorium on health care layoffs."

The 30 care aides and licensed practical nurses working with seniors at MSA Manor received the news Monday afternoon. A new, as yet unidentified, subcontractor will take over care services from Abby Therapeutics on August 13.

The Abbotsford workers join more than 650 care staff at five nursing homes who have been handed pink slips in the last six weeks. Health employers plan another 500 terminations in the coming year, though they have not announced where or when they will take place.

Another 300 cleaning and maintenance jobs are at risk in the Okanagan as the result of plans to expand hospitals in Vernon and Kelowna through a partnership with a private consortium.

Ironically, Abby Therapeutics will take over the contract for care services at Nanaimo Seniors Village in September. The 168 care staff at the facility recently received layoff notices from the current subcontractor. It's the third time the workers have been terminated since 2004.

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