Bargaining Bulletin

HEU members to health employers

Since HEU members voted in overwhelming numbers for an 89-per-cent strike mandate, the comment cards from members have continued to pile up at provincial office. Your message to employers about working conditions post-Bill 29 is unmistakable: wage cuts, benefit concessions, privatization and contracting out do NOT work.

Here's a sample:

Seniors are transferred and 25 per cent of them die in three months. Long time employees (over 20 years of service) are forced to change worksites and take part-time jobs. The rest of us have to live with the stress of knowing we are next.
— *HEU member, Penticton Retirement Centre*

I get told after 13 years as a part-time clerk I will not have a job soon. I am a 44-year-old worker with three children. Co-workers that make a decent living are laid off and on unemployment insurance already. You are telling me that the women of BC are not worth a decent wage!
— *HEU member, Surrey Memorial*

A P3 is being built in Williams Lake. Our extended care unit is being closed— 46 beds. This means that 130 workers will be laid off. There needs to be successorship at the new facility for the displaced workers. One hundred and thirty people will be out on the street. Be ready for war.
— *HEU member, Cariboo Memorial*

On December 25, I went to work. 7am report: A patient I nursed for 18 years died at 6am. I had to say 'Merry Xmas' and love and treat my other patients. And then at 10am, wash and tag and bag my dead patient and take her to the morgue. I then went home to my five kids and did my best to have Xmas day. Superstat pay would not have changed my day, but when bad things happen at Xmas, it's really hard on us.
— *HEU member, Queen's Park Care Centre*

Stay tuned for more comments from front-line health care workers about what it's like working in B.C.'s post-Bill 29 health care environment.

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