



Bargaining Bulletin

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

THE HEART OF HEALTH CARE

Workers' rights violated by BC Liberals' Bill 37

*Precedent-setting health care legislation
includes slashed wages, benefits and more*

THE BC Liberal government has turned its back on a freely-negotiated collective agreement by ramming through precedent-setting legislation that will deny health care workers their fundamental bargaining rights, says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt.

Bill 37 imposes massive wage rollbacks on 43,000 hospital and long-term health care workers while allowing for the continued privatization of health services.

The two-year imposed contract, retroactive to April 1, provides no employment security and imposes most of the concessions tabled by health employers in the last round of bargaining.

Bill 37's provisions include the following:

- 37.5-hour work week: proposed by HEABC on February 19, this provision can be implemented within 90 days of the passage of Bill 37;
- Bumping rights: seniority rights and

ability to transfer to positions to be determined at the discretion of the Lieutenant-Governor, overriding Bill 29;

- Wages: 11-per-cent wage cuts or 10-per-cent reduction in total compensation (wages and benefits) as determined by an arbitrator. The arbitrator can choose from a menu of items considered "compensation". These include wages, overtime, shift, weekend premiums, trades-qualification premiums, on-call differential, statutory holidays and vacation, leaves (compassionate, special and sick – including WCB injury on duty and cash payout of sick leave—maternity and parental), and health and welfare benefits;
- Former collective agreement language rewritten (Section 16.01 c): reverses current ability of part-timers to get extra work and increases casual workforce;

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- New language that allows employers to change start and stop time, by up to two hours, without paying overtime.

With Bill 37, says Allnut, the Campbell Liberals continue to demonstrate nothing but disdain for health care's front line workers.

“Once again, this premier and his government have callously rewritten the law to suit their privatization agenda in health care and violated the legal rights of tens of thousands of workers in the process.”

Since the 2001 election, the government has used legislation to impose agreements on doctors, nurses and paramedical professionals and to rip up the last collective agreement negotiated by this group of health care workers.

But Bill 37 is the first time the Campbell Liberals have imposed wage and benefits cuts on a group of workers through legislation.

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