



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWS RELEASE

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Layoff notices issued to nearly 1,200 Lower Mainland health care workers

It's time for successorship laws that protect workers and ensure stable health care delivery, says the Hospital Employees' Union

Staff at a Surrey long-term care facility, and cleaners in Vancouver Coastal Health hospitals, have been given layoff notices by their corporate employers.

The Ahmon Group has told more than 240 care aides, nurses, cleaners, and dietary workers that it will contract out all of their work at its Laurel Place care home in Surrey, effective June 1, 2015.

The workers are members of HEU and signed a first collective agreement with Ahmon Group just last October.

And Aramark – the U.S.-corporation that has held a commercial contract to clean Vancouver Coastal Health hospitals and extended care facilities since 2003 – has lost its contract and will lay off about 935 staff between August 9 and September 22.

HEU has negotiated three successive collective agreements with Aramark.

Both companies issued the layoff notices on Thursday.

HEU secretary-business manager says that stronger successorship language is needed to protect workers and services in a health care system that has seen significant privatization over the last decade.

“Contracting out, contract flipping and sales of business will become more and more frequent as B.C.’s privatization of seniors’ care and hospital support services enters its second decade,” says Pearson.

“We need better protections in place to ensure that hospital services and seniors’ care is not thrown into chaos as a result of contracting out and contract flipping.

“And these workers – many of them among the lowest paid in our public health care system – deserve stronger employment security and protection of their hard-earned wages and benefits,” adds Pearson.

“As it stands, they don’t even know if they’ll be hired by a new contractor.”

Most health care workers have no access to even the weak successorship provisions in the *Labour Code*. The B.C. Liberals excluded both public employers and publicly-subsidized private employers from these provisions in 2002 and 2003.

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