



HEU wins contracting out policy grievance at Sunridge Place

Last week, B.C. arbitrator Irene Holden ruled in favour of the Hospital Employees' Union in a policy grievance the union filed against a private care provider, citing collective agreement violations in the contracting out of work at Sunridge Place in Duncan.

In July 2013, HEU served notice to bargain with Sunridge Place Limited Partnership for a renewed collective agreement. But rather than negotiating, the employer announced plans to sell the residential care and assisted living complex.

Over several months, HEU continued to pursue negotiations with the new owner, Park Place, to settle a renewed contract. But the employer repeatedly delayed responding to the union's requests for vital information to launch the bargaining process.

At the same time, Park Place signed a contract with CareCorp Seniors Services to contract out the work, resulting in 265 HEU members losing their jobs, their union representation, and their right to bargain a renewal collective agreement.

In her November 21 decision, arbitrator Holden cited Park Place for violating the collective agreement contracting-out provisions that would have required the company to share information and discuss alternatives to contracting out.

HEU secretary-business manager Jennifer Whiteside says the ruling confirms that employers can't delay, avoid or ignore the union while simultaneously sealing a deal with a subcontractor.

"There needs to be transparency and respect for our members and their collective agreements," says Whiteside.

In a similar case at New Horizons Care Centre in Campbell River, arbitrator Holden ruled in June 2016 that Park Place committed an unfair labour practice, motivated by "anti-union animus", when they contracted out more than 100 HEU members at New Horizons in 2014.

HEU has since reorganized workers at both New Horizons and Sunridge Place, and has negotiated first collective agreements at both sites.

The union will now seek a remedy for the violation of the collective agreement.

December 1, 2016