



Thousands of contracted-out workers prepare to return in-house in 2022

Since the government's announcement to reunite the health care team in August 2021, health authorities have been moving swiftly to bring privatized cleaning and dietary staff back in-house.

In November 2021, 252 HEU members at six sites on Vancouver Island were among the first contracted-out workers to be welcomed into their new jobs under the Vancouver Island Health Authority. A second group on Vancouver Island is set to return on February 18.

Since then, Vancouver Coastal Health, Fraser Health and the Provincial Health Services authorities as well as Providence Healthcare have been laying the groundwork for HEU members to return throughout 2022.

HEU is working collaboratively with the health authorities to implement a negotiated Labour Adjustment Transfer Agreement and ensure that the transition back in-house is as smooth as possible for workers.

"The transition experience on Vancouver Island was very positive," says Meena Brisard, HEU's secretary-business manager. "We are encouraged by the willingness of health authorities to help workers as much as possible through this process."

In January 2022, HEU hosted a series of information sessions with members who have already received notice about the transfer, to share general information about the process of returning in-house.

Hundreds of workers participated in these sessions to learn about the process for transitioning back to the health authorities.

Members learned that their seniority, and in some cases service, will be recognized when their jobs are transferred to the health authorities. Members also learned that even if they are on leave, they are still eligible to transfer in-house.

Impacted members were reminded to register with their health authority when the time comes to help the health authority to collect the information about workers returning in-house. Registering is normally done on the health authority's website.

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“The registration process will vary from health authority to health authority,” says Máire Kirwan, coordinator of private sector bargaining at HEU. “But it is critical for HEU members to make sure they register so they can secure their job under the health authority.”

HEU is continuing to press government on the importance of bringing back members working in public-private partnership (P3) facilities, whose return in-house has not been confirmed.

“We need to reverse the privatization that fragmented our public health system,” says Meena Brisard. “That means that all health care workers should be reunited in the public system, regardless of the facility’s funding model.”

On Vancouver Island, HEU and Island Health successfully pushed for the return of all members working in the Patient Care Centre P3 facility at Royal Jubilee Hospital.

The union encourages members to direct any questions they have about returning in-house to return@heu.org or call 1-877-456-9194.

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