



Tentative agreement commits to further reversing health care privatization

Hundreds of housekeepers and food service workers in Fraser Health public-private partnership (P3) facilities will return to the public sector as part of the tentative agreement reached between Hospital Employees' Union (HEU) and Health Employers' Association of BC (HEABC).

The tentative agreement, still to be ratified by HEU members, includes a commitment from the HEABC and the Government of British Columbia to bring hundreds of Fraser Health contracted out workers at P3 facilities into the Facilities subsector during the term of the collective agreement.

“This work would not have happened without ongoing advocacy and action by HEU members throughout the years,” says HEU secretary-business manager Meena Brisard.

“And we won't stop until all health care workers, no matter where they work, are reunited and are treated fairly and equally.”

In August 2021, the provincial government announced that thousands of workers in food services and housekeeping, under 21 commercial contracts with private contractors would be returned under the employ of health authorities, reversing nearly two decades of health care privatization and contracting out under the previous government.

Since the announcement, more than 3,500 privatized workers have returned in house and have re-joined health care workers across the province under the Facilities collective agreement. These transitions have taken place under the Labour Adjustment Template Agreement, negotiated between HEU and health employers.

The last group of workers to be reunited with the health care team under this agreement will return at the end of October 2022.

However, up to now, the transition has not included workers at most health care sites that were built and financed under P3 schemes.

One exception is the Patient Care Centre at Royal Jubilee Hospital on Vancouver Island, a P3 site where contracted support services workers were brought back in-house by the Vancouver Island Health Authority, alongside other sites in its transition process.

The sites that Fraser Health will repatriate as part of its commitment in the Facilities tentative agreement include: Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre (Food,

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Patient Portering, Housekeeping, and Help Desk); Surrey Memorial Hospital Critical Care Tower (Housekeeping); and Jim Pattison Outpatient Care and Surgery Centre (Housekeeping).

HEU continues to press for housekeeping staff working in the P3 Teck building at the BC Children's and Women's Hospital to also be brought back in-house as soon as possible.

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