



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWSLETTER

PLEASE POST

Last group of privatized housekeepers at Children and Women's Hospital will return to the public sector

Housekeepers working in the Teck Building at BC Women and Children's Hospital (BCCW) are the latest group of privatized health care support workers confirmed to return to the public sector.

In August 2021, the province's health minister, Adrian Dix, announced that more than 4,000 housekeeping and dietary staff employed by private companies under 21 contracts would return under the employ of health authorities, reversing nearly two decades of health care privatization and contracting out under the BC Liberal government.

"This is a positive move that recognizes that all health support staff working at the hospitals must be reunited with the rest of the health care team to ensure more effective coordination of health care services, less turnover and more security for workers," says Meena Brisard, HEU secretary-business manager.

Health support service workers at sites that were built and financed under public-private partnership (P3) schemes, like those at the Teck Building at BCCW, were not initially included in the government's repatriation announcement.

But as thousands of workers have been brought back in-house over 2021-2022, health authorities have subsequently taken steps to also bring back workers at P3 sites. Island Health brought back workers at Royal Jubilee Hospital's Patient Care Centre P3 in June 2022, and in September 2022, Fraser Health committed to bring back support services at its P3 sites by the end of 2023.

Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) is the latest to confirm that it will bring back contracted support services at its P3 site, the Teck Building at the BCCW. It anticipates that workers will be brought in-house in April 2023.

"This work would not have happened without ongoing advocacy and action by HEU members throughout the years, and in particular those at BCCW's Teck Building who have been determined to be brought in-house alongside their colleagues," says Brisard.

For nearly 100 housekeepers who have been employed by Compass, this means an immediate improvement to their wages, benefits and retirement security, as they will be brought under the common Facilities collective agreement that covers more than 60,000 health care workers across the province.

HEU will work collaboratively with PHSA to ensure a smooth transfer of privatized Teck workers back into the health authority, under the negotiated Labour Adjustment and Transfer Agreement—the framework used to transfer thousands of workers back in-house over 2021-2022.

January 30, 2023