

# Media Release



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## Long-term care workers at seven B.C. care homes ratify five-year agreement with employer

*No contracting out, improved benefits and hallmark wage protections all part of renewed contract to improve working and caring conditions*

[BURNABY] – On Friday, November 24, nearly 1,100 members of the Hospital Employees' Union (HEU) who work in long-term care for Good Samaritan Canada renewed a collective agreement that prevents contracting out, provides enhanced benefits and shift differentials, and for the first-time embeds hallmark protections to wages currently subsidized by the Province.

HEU secretary-business manager Meena Brisard says the hard-won five-year contract that expires March 31, 2025 was good news for residents and the workers that deliver the care at the non-profit care home operator's seven B.C. facilities.

"For the past few years, Good Samaritan – like many other contracted long-term care providers across the province – has struggled with fully staffing their facilities," says Brisard. "The renewed contracting out protections, improved benefits and enhanced shift differentials in this new five-year deal together offer a good step forward when it comes to retaining skilled, longtime staff and recruiting new workers to look after the 900-plus residents in Good Samaritan's care."

"On top of these gains, Good Samaritan Canada has agreed to maintain their staff wage levels at the same rates that workers in publicly-run long-term care facilities receive, should there be any changes to annual provincial wage top-up subsidies to for-profit and non-profit care home operators," said Brisard. "This assurance that wages will be maintained at the same level as found in the publicly-operated care homes offers much-needed economic security for Good Samaritan workers, particularly in these uncertain times of mounting household costs."

According to the Ministry of Health, at the outset of the pandemic in the spring of 2020, the Province brought in wage levelling to ensure residents in long-term-care and assisted-living facilities continued receiving high-quality care from fairly compensated workers.

Workers at the seven Good Samaritan Canada sites were without a contract for over three-and-a-half years. Following more than two years of negotiations with Good Samaritan Canada, a successful strike vote and one day of targeted job action, HEU's bargaining committee reached a tentative agreement on November 3. Voting on the tentative mediated deal took place at the seven sites between November 16 and 24.

"With this agreement in place at Good Samaritan, HEU will continue its focus on reducing staff turnover and providing a higher standard of working and caring conditions that care home residents and care home workers deserve," says Brisard. "Moreover, we will continue to press the government to fulfil its 2020 election promise to restore standard wages, benefits and working conditions in seniors' care that were dismantled by the previous BC Liberal government."

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*HEU represents more than 60,000 health care workers across B.C., including about 28,000 working directly with seniors in long-term care and other care settings.*