



## HEU contracted support service members ratify four-year agreements

Eighteen months of member actions and tough bargaining in the contracted support service workers (CSSW) sector has finally come to a successful conclusion for 4,000 HEU members.

On November 24, the last remaining ratification votes were taken on Vancouver Island, delivering a new four-year deal covering HEU housekeepers and dietary workers. CSSW members, work for four multinational corporations across 40 acute care and long-term care facilities in four health authorities – Vancouver Coastal/Providence, Fraser, Provincial Health Services, and Vancouver Island.

The eleven agreements established a new B.C.-wide industry standard across the sector, improving members' job security, rights and wages. And a hard won agreement between HEU and the health authorities now ensures that when commercial contracts are re-tendered, members will keep their jobs, their collective agreement and their union.

“Since 2003, the health authorities cut costs on the backs of some of our lowest paid members – creating hardship for thousands of workers who provide critical health care support,” says HEU secretary-business manager Jennifer Whiteside. “And even worse, health authorities could change contractors without any protections for their employees, a workforce that is comprised of mostly women and racialized workers.”

“The success of members in this round of bargaining in the privatized support service sector is due largely to the actions that members took – the spring petition campaign and rally at St. Paul’s Hospital, the massive June strike votes, the successful job actions over the late summer and early fall, and the many, many other demonstrations of solidarity,” says Whiteside. “By standing together – in the workplace or on the streets outside – member demands for a more secure future in health care and better compensation could not be ignored by the four employers, or the health authorities.”

“With this round of bargaining completed, we have begun to turn the page on Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals’ vicious anti-worker agenda that targeted skilled, experienced cleaning and dietary staff who keep our hospitals safe and patients nourished,” says Whiteside. “We rejoice today, but tomorrow we will continue to push for the rights of HEU support service workers, as we begin to enforce these new collective agreements and prepare for the next round of bargaining in 2020.”

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