



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

# NEWS RELEASE

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DECEMBER 9, 2008

## Health minister's statement on shared services "premature and unhelpful"

Health Services Minister George Abbott has jumped the gun and ignored a consultation process with union representatives on the consolidation of health care services, says the Hospital Employees' Union.

The health minister issued a news release earlier today touting potential savings of \$150 million resulting from plans to consolidate supply chain services like purchasing, warehousing and distribution.

Darcy says these plans were to be on the table next week when the union and representatives of the government's Shared Services Organization were scheduled to meet.

"The health minister is causing fear and insecurity amongst health care workers by making this announcement before first providing details to the union and its members," says HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy.

"A consultation process has been established. At next week's meeting, we thought we would be hearing the details of the health authorities' consolidation plans so that we could take the information back to our members, and then present our own ideas.

"Our members are the experts when it comes to their jobs. They know where and how to achieve efficiencies and have done so very successfully," Darcy says.

"It is unfortunate that the health minister chose to short-circuit this process by suggesting that a plan of action has been determined before this meeting takes place. His statement today was both premature and unhelpful."

Darcy says that if there is one lesson that the government should have learned from last year's Supreme Court of Canada's decision on *Bill 29*, it was the need to consult with workers and their unions before taking actions that might affect workers' livelihoods.

The union and the Shared Services Organization had agreed to use the consultation process outlined in the *Bill 29* settlement agreement. Under the terms of that agreement, the union must be consulted on changes that directly impact its members and may present its own solutions to improve the provision of services.

"What is required now is for government and health authorities to immediately assure workers that their jobs are secure and that they will continue to be covered by their existing collective agreement," Darcy says.

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