



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

BARGAINING BULLETIN

PLEASE POST

Compass support services workers on strike at Beacon Hill Villa in Victoria

On December 2, HEU support services members – employed by Compass and working at Beacon Hill Villa in Victoria – began picketing following 72-hour strike notice issued last week.

Talks recently broke down after Compass refused to go back to the bargaining table over compensation issues.

Since December 31, 2007, about 20 HEU dietary, laundry and housekeeping members have been working at the Villa without a contract. On average, support staff earns \$11.21 an hour, far below their counterparts at other Compass-employed facilities such as Guildford Seniors Village in Surrey.

“The main issue is that Compass brought a deal to the table, then withdrew it and cut the offer way down,” says HEU bargaining representative Noel Gulbransen. “Renewing this agreement at the current offer would leave workers paid less than those employed by Compass – in a first contract – at Guildford. Wages for Beacon Hill members are falling way behind.”

Although Compass had made a wage offer of 12 per cent over three years – which the bargaining committee rejected in mediation – the company slashed its wage proposal to zero per cent in 2008 and 2009, a \$0.45 an hour increase upon ratification, a \$0.45 an hour increase on July 1, 2010, and was only willing to pay 60 per cent of retroactive wages.

In November, after months of negotiations and mediation with Labour Relations Board arbitrator Grant McArthur, members voted 87 per cent in favour of job action, and issued strike notice on November 26.

“Our members are asking for a fair increase,” says Gulbransen. “Their wages are substandard. Support services workers do an important job – providing healthy meals, doing personal laundry, and ensuring infection control protocols are met – to keep seniors safe and comfortable at Beacon Hill. And they deserve to earn family-supporting wages.”

Beacon Hill Villa is an 80-bed residential care facility in Victoria, owned and operated by B.C.-based Retirement Concepts. This private-for-profit company contracts out direct care (temporarily to Well-Being Senior Services after Abbey Therapeutic Services, Inc. recently walked away from its contract), and support services – dietary, laundry and housekeeping – to Compass Group Canada.

The union has met with the Labour Relations Board in an effort to get Compass back to the table.

December 4, 2009

