



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

BARGAINING BULLETIN

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HEU reaches tentative deal with Aramark in Vancouver Coastal Health

Proposed agreement includes wage and benefits improvements, tools to address health and safety, workload and training issues

After almost nine months of negotiations, and a recent round of intensive meetings, bargaining committee members reached a tentative agreement with Aramark on Wednesday afternoon.

The proposed agreement would see wage rates of \$13.05 an hour increase by 15 per cent, to \$15.00 an hour, by October 1, 2011. A list of wage increases is included below.

Improvements to benefits include a prescription drug card, effective on the date of ratification, and 70 per cent employer-paid premiums as of March 1, 2010.

Working conditions were another top priority for members. The committee was able to negotiate significant improvements on non-monetary issues, such as workload, training, benefits for casuals, return-to-work programs, and paycheque errors. By putting working conditions and health and safety issues in the collective agreement, members have the ability to file grievances and take action if the employer violates these rights.

“The Aramark committee bargained tirelessly for better benefits, rights and protections for our members,” said HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy.

“The bargaining committee also made significant progress toward a living wage, despite the challenges of an economic recession and growing unemployment,” added Darcy.

“These gains could not have been achieved without the influence and hard work of living wage activists, other bargaining support actions, and the strong strike mandate from members.”

Over the past two weeks, HEU bargaining committees also reached tentative agreements with Sodexo and Compass.

The proposed Aramark agreement is effective from October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2012.

Improvements to wages, benefits, sick days

The following increases cover HEU members employed by Aramark in VCHA

April 1, 2009	\$0.40 per hour	\$13.45
October 1, 2009	\$0.45 per hour	\$13.90
October 1, 2010	\$0.35 per hour	\$14.25
April 1, 2011	\$0.25 per hour	\$14.50
October 1, 2011	\$0.50 per hour	\$15.00

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Other monetary improvements

- Members will receive a signing bonus of \$0.75 per hour for all hours worked between January 1, 2009 and March 31, 2009 – excluding overtime. For a full-time worker, this amounts to approximately \$350, which will be paid on a separate cheque within 30 days of ratification.
- Members will receive a prescription drug card, effective on the date of ratification. This means workers will no longer have to pay prescription costs up front and then wait for reimbursement. The employer will pay 70 per cent of extended health, dental, life insurance and MSP premiums as of March 1, 2010.
- Waiting period for sick leave benefits is eliminated. Members will now be eligible for sick leave, once the probation period is passed and they are enrolled on the benefits plan.
- Night shift premiums are increased from \$0.70 per hour to \$0.85 per hour, effective on the date of ratification.
- Casual employees, who work 20 or more hours per week for three months, will receive benefits.

Non-monetary gains on health and safety, workload, scheduling

- Improved workload language means the employer is responsible for reassigning or prioritizing jobs in cases where another worker's absence is causing workload problems.
- Members can now access the grievance process if the employer fails to follow these new workload provisions.
- Regional union/management meetings can now be used to discuss and solve workload issues.
- Union/management committees will be established at each work site to address workplace issues.
- Workers will have the right to union representation while participating in return-to-work programs following an illness or injury. A return to work program may include modified duties if necessary.
- When more than \$75 is missing from a paycheque, the employer will issue a separate cheque within three banking days of receiving the member's request.
- The employer will ensure that they provide adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) to workers. Any absence of PPE can be immediately reported to the supervisor. This means a worker can also file a grievance if the employer fails to provide the necessary equipment.
- When the employer reassigns workers to different areas due to operational requirements, they will seek out the most junior qualified worker, whose reassignment results in minimal disruption.
- Members will receive an orientation if the employer assigns them to an area where they have not worked before. The employer is required to provide the necessary training for that assignment or area.

HEU members working for Aramark will have the opportunity to vote on the proposed agreements in meetings that will be scheduled shortly. The Aramark bargaining committee is recommending that members vote "yes" to the proposed agreement.

Further details will be available in a comprehensive report, distributed over the coming days.

For more information about bargaining with Aramark, contact Noel Gulbransen at 604-456-7031.

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