



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWS RELEASE

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HEU reaches tentative agreement with Compass for hospital cleaning and dietary staff

Improvements to wages, health and safety protections will contribute to a more stable workforce and higher quality services

The Hospital Employees' Union has reached a tentative deal with the hospital contractor Compass Group for two collective agreements covering about 1,100 cleaning and dietary workers employed in the Provincial Health Services Authority and Vancouver Island health authorities.

The tentative contracts were reached late Thursday and early Friday afternoon, after seven months of negotiations. For most workers, it will mean wage increases of 13 per cent over the life of the agreement, bringing pay rates up from \$13.05 to \$14.75 per hour by the final year of the agreement.

Workers' benefits will go from 70 to 100 per cent employer-paid and they will see an increase from six to eight paid sick days.

The four-year contract includes stronger health and safety protections around workload and short staffing, as well as a new HEU-Compass health and safety steering committee to address issues at a company-wide level. Other provisions will help stabilize the workforce through access to benefits and new 'float' positions for casual workers.

"The improvements to wages and working conditions in this contract are an important step toward greater stability in the health care workforce and improved services for patients," says HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy.

"Housekeeping and dietary workers are essential to infection control and patient care," adds Darcy, "and we will continue to press government and health authorities to ensure their contractors provide the necessary conditions for clean and safe hospitals."

HEU members employed by Compass will vote on the agreement at meetings in early May.

The contracts cover housekeepers and dietary workers employed at PHSA sites like Children's and Women's Hospital, the BC Cancer Agency, and at a number of hospitals and extended care facilities on southern and central Vancouver Island. If ratified, the contract would expire September 30, 2012.

HEU reached a tentative agreement with Sodexo late last weekend. Negotiations with Aramark are expected to resume early next week. Both companies hold similar contracts in the Vancouver Coastal and Fraser health authorities.

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