



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

# NEWS RELEASE

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## HEU reaches tentative agreement with Sodexo for hospital cleaning and dietary staff

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

The Hospital Employees' Union has reached a tentative deal with the hospital contractor Sodexo for a new collective agreement covering about 1,500 cleaning and dietary workers in the Lower Mainland, on the Sunshine Coast and in Victoria.

The tentative contract was reached late Sunday, after six months of negotiations. For most workers, it will mean wage increases of 15 per cent over the life of the agreement, bringing pay rates up from \$13.05 to \$15.00 per hour by October 2011.

Workers will also see a greater portion of their benefits' costs covered by the employer, as well as two additional sick days.

The four-year agreement includes stronger health and safety protections around issues like personal protective equipment and workload, as well as provisions to improve training, and to stabilize the workforce through access to benefits 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.

"This tentative agreement provides a solid foundation for the company and the union to work productively to address these issues."

The union will continue to push for government and health authorities to implement policies that require their contractors to provide living wages and safe working conditions.

Members will vote on the agreement at meetings in early May. The contract covers housekeepers in the Fraser Health Authority, dietary workers in the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, as well as support services workers in four long-term care and assisted living facilities.

HEU continues to negotiate with Compass and Aramark, who hold similar contracts in the Provincial Health Services, Vancouver Coastal and Vancouver Island health authorities.

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Contact: Olive Dempsey, HEU communications officer 604-816-3917 (cell)

