



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

# NEWS RELEASE

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## HEU reaches tentative agreement with Aramark for hospital cleaning staff in Vancouver Coastal Health

*Improvements to wages, health and safety protections will contribute to workforce stability and higher quality services*

Hospital Employees' Union members have reached a tentative agreement with the Philadelphia-based hospital contractor Aramark, covering about 1,000 cleaning staff employed in the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority.

The tentative agreement was reached late Wednesday afternoon, after nine 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 1, 2011.

The four-year contract includes stronger health and safety protections, and improved rights related to workload, short-staffing, training and access to personal protective equipment. Casual workers will also now be eligible for benefits.

"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 Aramark will vote on the agreement at meetings in May.

The agreement covers hospital housekeepers employed in Vancouver Coastal Health Authority facilities like Vancouver General, St Paul's, Richmond and Lion's Gate hospitals. If ratified, the contract would expire September 30, 2012.

Over the past week and a half, HEU also reached tentative agreements with Sodexo and Compass, who hold similar contracts for dietary and cleaning services in the Vancouver Coastal, Fraser, Vancouver Island and Provincial Health Services authorities.

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Contact: Mike Old, HEU communications director, 604-828-6771 (cell)

