



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWSLETTER

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Tilbury Laundry members told they could be out of a job by next summer

VCHA ponders selling publicly-owned and operated hospital laundry facility, contracting out the work to the private sector

The Vancouver Coastal Health Authority is moving to contract out the remaining laundry services provided by the Tilbury Regional Hospital Laundry (TRHL) to Lower Mainland hospitals. If the health authority continues with its privatization plan, more than 80 HEU members could lose their jobs by July 2010.

Health authority representatives met with workers on September 15 to outline plans to sell the building and equipment, and issue layoff notices to everyone around Christmas this year.

“Tilbury remains an efficient, highly productive facility with long-serving workers,” says HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy. “Selling off a sound, public asset and contracting out the work doesn’t make sense in uncertain economic times when stable, family-supporting jobs are necessary to the province’s financial recovery.”

Under the *Bill 29* settlement agreement, the health authority must meet with members and the union to explore options other than contracting out. Consultation dates have not been set but talks may get underway as early as the first week of October.

At the beginning of the decade, the Tilbury Regional Hospital Laundry (TRHL) was touted as an example of an outstanding health care infrastructure operation, providing comprehensive laundry and linen services to the majority of hospitals in the Lower Mainland. The Delta-based, wholly public facility was cost-effective, highly efficient and provided good jobs with decent wages and family-supporting benefits to more than 150 HEU members.

But despite being recognized as one of Canada’s best public hospital laundries, Tilbury became a privatization casualty when Vancouver Coastal Health Authority first contracted out laundry and linen services to the private sector in July 2003.

September 17, 2009

