



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWSLETTER

PLEASE POST

VCHA, FHA plans to contract out laundry, food services are short-sighted, says union

Labour adjustment measures in place to assist affected workers

The Vancouver Coastal and Fraser health authorities have announced plans to contract out laundry and food services in a range of facilities, a move that could affect approximately 200 workers.

The HEU has a number of labour adjustment measures in place to help individuals potentially affected by the move, including access to a \$5 million retraining fund negotiated last year.

VCHA wants to eliminate remaining in-house laundry services throughout the region, which stretches from the Sunshine Coast through Vancouver to Richmond. Fraser Health is looking to contract out more laundry services at various facilities from Burnaby to Hope, and is considering the same for food services in the eastern part of the region.

Much of the laundry in the region had already been contracted out in 2003, as were most patient food services in Vancouver Coastal.

“Health authorities are rushing into another round of contracting out with little regard for the impact these decisions will make on workers and on patients and residents,” says HEU secretary business manager Judy Darcy.

“This misguided approach overlooks how valuable in-house services are and ignores the innovation and efficiencies our members already contribute to the system.”

These notices come at a time when the jobs of health care workers across the system are under attack – from nurses and managers to laundry workers and clerical staff.

Under measures negotiated by HEU after the Supreme Court threw out provisions of *Bill 29* as unconstitutional, health authorities and employers must consult with workers and their unions before making a decision to contract out services.

Additional measures in the settlement include a number of retraining and labour adjustment measures to assist workers facing lay off as a result of contracting out.

These include:

- financial assistance including living stipends for retraining;
- access to work on a casual list while retraining;

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- ability to port service and seniority after retraining;
- access to job vacancies across the province;
- extended recall period, and
- financial assistance with moving costs.

These provisions apply to workers covered by the Facilities Subsector collective agreement and are in addition to rights – such as enhanced severance – contained in the 2006-2010 collective agreement.

Please refer to the October 29, 2009 HEU newsletter for more details on your rights, if you are affected by these recent announcements.

HEU has requested additional information from VCHA and FHA about their plans.

In the next two weeks, the union will be forming a member committee to scrutinize the health authorities' plans. HEU will also be exploring ways to work with members and HEU locals to protect decent unionized jobs and quality public services.

If you have any questions, please contact your servicing representative.

November 2, 2009