



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

BARGAINING BULLETIN

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Hamlets at Westsyde HEU members ratify two-year contract

More than 130 front-line health care workers at Hamlets at Westsyde in Kamloops have an extra reason to celebrate the holiday season – job security.

Yesterday, workers voted 84 per cent in favour of ratifying the two-year collective agreement, which expires December 31, 2012.

“We’re very relieved,” said Nicole Bone, a care aide at the Hamlets, and a member of the bargaining team. “When I went there last night to wish the residents a Merry Christmas, I told them about the vote results. The residents were all really excited that they wouldn’t be losing us, and some of them cried tears of joy. Everyone was happy.”

HEU has represented workers – including care aides, licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, assisted living workers and recreation aides – at the long-term care home since February 2009. A first collective agreement with private operator Osprey Care Inc. was reached with the assistance of arbitrator Vince Ready in September 2010, after more than a year of negotiations failed to produce one.

But in November, the operator announced plans to contract out the 132 unionized staff members as a cost-savings measure. Workers would have been laid off in February 2011.

The union then filed an unfair labour practice and bargaining in bad faith complaint with the B.C. Labour Relations Board, but the parties were able to reach a tentative settlement on December 15.

“Now that we’ve ratified our contract, we’re hoping for labour peace with this employer,” said HEU’s bargaining representative Debbie Kamal Ali. “It’s a good moral boost for the staff, who work really hard day after day providing quality care. They have job security for the next two years. And it’s a huge win for the residents who will have continuity of care maintained.”

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