



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

# BARGAINING BULLETIN

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## Westcana: Get serious and stop stalling

### *Next round of mediated talks scheduled for early March*

Contract talks covering dietary and housekeeping workers employed by WestCana at Arranglen Gardens in Qualicum will resume on March 5 and 6 with the assistance of Labour Relations Board mediator Grant McArthur.

But the union's bargaining spokesperson Bonnie Youngman says most members "are absolutely fed up with this employer's unprofessional and disrespectful approach to the bargaining process.

"They expect their employer to stop wasting time and get down to the business of negotiating a fair first collective agreement that recognizes the true value of their work."

Youngman says HEU applied for labour board mediation, under Section 74 of B.C.'s *Labour Code*, in March, 2006. Since that time the union and the employer have met on only five occasions.

"Frankly, they're almost never available to bargain," says Youngman. "And they even cancelled our most recent session – set for February 6 – when both the union and the mediator were fully prepared to meet by phone.

"The level of irresponsibility demonstrated throughout the bargaining process would be disturbing under any circumstances," she says. "But with Arranglen's expansion to include assisted living, and the recent move to another building, there are additional challenges in the workplace that need to be addressed through the procedures that come with a solid collective agreement."

Youngman reports that negotiations thus far have secured a grievance procedure, but more than 20 issues related to basic rights for workers, wages and benefits remain unresolved.

"We want this employer to stop stalling, get serious about bargaining and give their employees the basic respect they deserve," she says.

Currently, housekeepers earn between \$12.50 and \$12.75 an hour. Dietary workers in the care area earn between \$11.50 and \$12.00 an hour. Dietary workers serving meals in the assisted living dining room earn \$12.50 an hour.

"No matter how you cut it, these wages do not reflect the value of the services our members provide to the residents in their care," says Youngman.

Bargaining Committee members are: Janet McGuire, Carol McNeil and Bonnie Youngman – *HEU Bargaining Representative*.

February 14, 2007

