



Bargaining Bulletin

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

THE HEART OF HEALTH CARE

Enough is enough, say frustrated Compass VHA workers

Compass health care workers on Vancouver Island say they are fed up with the employer's ongoing refusal to get serious at the bargaining table.

That message came through loud and clear when union representatives met with members during a series of on-site visits on May 30, 31 and June 1, 2006.

HEU's bargaining spokesperson Heather Compton says in the five months since bargaining began, Compass has only made themselves available for three face-to-face meetings with the union.

"If it's not one thing, it's another. When it comes to shirking their bargaining responsibilities, there's no end of excuses from this employer," says Compton.

"Everywhere we went, members expressed their anger and frustration with the pace of contract talks. They want the company to stop stalling and get down to the business of negotiating a first collective agreement."

In addition to holding a meeting of the Compass Victoria local, union representatives held on-site visits at Royal Jubilee, Victoria General, Glengarry, Aberdeen, Queen Alexandra, Cowichan Regional hospital, Cairnsmore, Nanaimo Regional hospital and Saanich Peninsula.

The 700 Compass workers, who provide housekeeping and dietary services at acute care hospitals and long-term care homes, report serious workload issues and high staff turnover. Most members say they are carrying extra workloads because relief workers are not called in to fill vacancies.

About 250 HEU members working for Compass in the Provincial Health Services Authority (BC Children and Women's Hospital, Sunnyhill Hospital and the BC Cancer Agency) are also bargaining a first collective agreement. Compton says Compass is using the same avoidance tactics at that bargaining table, and members are equally frustrated.

-OVER-

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24-HOUR COMPASS BARGAINING HOTLINE
sign up for e-mail @www.heu.org

1-800-663-5813, ext. 1515
739-1515 (Vancouver)

HEU web site:
www.heu.org



HEU has made a formal proposal to the Company to combine the two bargaining tables – as a way to make negotiations more effective and expedient – but Compass has yet to respond. (By comparison, Sodexho agreed to include nine separate groups at a single bargaining table during that round of negotiations.)

And while the company claims to be short on bargaining availability, it seems they've found plenty of time to engage in yet another legal challenge. This time, Compass will appeal the BC Supreme Court ruling upholding the Labour Relations Board's original decision that Compass must bargain as a single unit.

"They've already lost their bid to bargain separately as Morrison and Crothall. First they lost at the BC Labour Board. Then their motion to reconsider was turned down. And finally, they lost at the BC Supreme Court." says Compton.

"Instead of continuing to tie up the courts, Compass needs to come to the bargaining table in good faith, and work toward a settlement that respects our members and the patients in their care."

The next scheduled bargaining dates for Compass VIHA are July 10-14, 2006. Compass PHSA bargaining is set for June 19 - 22, 2006.

In the meantime, HEU's bargaining committees will be meeting next week to determine future action.