



News Release

THE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JULY 5, 2006

Local hospital workers back bargaining team with 99 per cent strike mandate

HEU says massive British corporation's actions threaten long-term labour stability in health care

Compass Group employees working in the Provincial Health Services Authority have backed their union bargaining team's effort to reach a first collective agreement with a 99 per cent strike mandate.

The Hospital Employees' Union says it will now ask the Labour Relations Board to assist the parties in reaching a contract covering more than 200 housekeeping and dietary workers at the B.C. Cancer Agency, B.C. Children's and Women's Hospital and the Sunnyhill Hospital for Children.

Little headway has been made in negotiations with the U.K.-based corporation since talks covering its PHSA employees began in January .

It's a similar situation on Vancouver Island where HEU is also bargaining with the company for 700 members working in Vancouver Island Health Authority facilities.

And last week, Compass walked away from a service contract with a Burnaby long-term care facility after an arbitrator imposed a first contract on the company that brought wages for support workers into line with its main competitors Aramark and Sodexo.

Compass – which recently reported six-month operating profits of more than \$530 million – told the 25 employees at the Normanna care home in letters issued Friday that the first contract award placed the world's largest catering company in a 'non-viable financial position.'

HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy says Compass' sole focus on profits stands in the way of long-term stability in B.C. health care facilities.

"Our union has successfully negotiated with public health employers, the B.C. government and Compass' competitors to reach long-term collective agreements that bring stability to the workplace and improve the quality of care we deliver to the public," says Darcy.

"Frankly, Compass' pleas of poverty are not credible. It's time for this company to step up to the plate and treat local workers and patients with respect."

– 30 –

Contact: Mike Old, communications director, 604-828-6771 (cell)

FRED MUZIN, President • JUDY DARCY, Secretary-Business Manager • MARY LaPLANTE, Financial Secretary
5000 North Fraser Way, Burnaby, B.C. V5J 5M3 • Tel: (604) 438-5000 • Fax: (604) 739-1510 • Web Site: www.heu.org

The B.C. Health Services Division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees

