



## Agreement expands options for workers impacted by VIHA cuts to seniors' care

The Hospital Employees' Union has signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the Vancouver Island Health Authority that provides more options for members affected by recently announced bed closures at seven public, long-term care facilities.

The MOA applies to members laid off as a result of 350 bed closures at Trillium Lodge, Dufferin Place, Cowichan Lodge, Glengarry Hospital (including Aberdeen and The Priory) and Gorge Road Hospital.

VIHA announced the closures on June 20 and they say they will transfer long-term care residents to new government-subsidized, private facilities.

HEU continues to oppose the bed cuts and the closure of Cowichan Lodge.

HEU servicing staff, regional vice-presidents and representatives of affected locals participated in the negotiations with VIHA.

### Important dates and information meetings

Most HEU members affected by the bed cuts received their lay-off notices on July 14. Under the terms of the MOA, these members will receive displacement information letters by July 31. These letters will outline displacement options and identify the following important dates:

August 7 – cut-off date for calculation of seniority

August 14 – displacement date

August 28 – displacement choice date

It is important that members who are not in the workplace or at home on August 14 call VIHA Human Resources in Victoria at 250-370-8049 or Central Island at 250-755-7691 x 3028 to arrange an earlier date to receive or review their options.

The displacement options have been expanded beyond those available in the collective agreement and in the *Bill 29 Settlement Agreement*, which also applies in this instance.

It is important to note that employees can bump other employees with less seniority and that the “seven year rule” is waived in this instance.

Servicing representatives will be holding information meetings to discuss these options at the affected locals in the near future. Meeting notices will be posted as soon as a schedule is available.

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Detailed information including current vacancies by site, posting options for all VIHA/HEU unfilled vacancies, and bump lists by site and by dovetailed seniority lists will be provided by the employer at each work site by August 14.

### **Enhanced severance**

To expand the number of vacancies available to displaced workers, VIHA will canvass all HEU members in residential and support services across the health authority to identify those interested in enhanced severance as outlined in the *Bill 29 Settlement Agreement*.

In the case of Cowichan Lodge, up to 20 regular employees whose voluntary departure or retirement would create a vacancy that could be filled by another laid-off worker at the facility, will be eligible for three months of additional wages (pro-rated).

### **Job sharing**

The MOA also outlines criteria for voluntary job sharing options among regular staff.

### **Float pools**

There will also be three float pools created under the MOA at Trillium Lodge/Eagle Park, Dufferin Place and Cowichan Lodge (for Chemainus Health Centre and Cairnsmore Place). These pools will provide work for approximately 36 members.

Shuttles will be provided by VIHA for those workers who travel from one site to another to access or maintain employment in these three float pools.

A fourth float pool will be created in the South Island for about 22 members.

### **Relocation assistance**

If laid-off workers accept a position within VIHA but outside their geographic region (North, Central or South Island), they will be eligible for up to \$5,000 in relocation assistance. There are other relocation options available under Appendix D of the *Bill 29 Settlement Agreement* as well.

### **Re-training**

Laid-off workers can also choose to access re-training as outlined in the *Bill 29 Settlement Agreement* for the following areas: LPN (surgical post-basic), RCA (acute care/bridging to LPN), Nursing Unit Assistants, Lab Assistants/Techs, Orthopedic Technicians, Schedulers, Admitting Clerks, CPS Attendants, Renal Techs, Cooks and Transcriptionists.

VIHA will also purchase seven seats in the Personal Care Attendants program in September at Camosun College for displaced workers.



### **Casual employees/list**

Casual employees can transfer their seniority hours and any existing banks to another single VIHA facilities work site casual list. To access work, they must have the required training and experience.

Regular employees with no bumping or vacancy options, and who register on a single casual list, will also be entitled to register for work on a VIHA regional dovetailed casual list. When working unfilled shifts on the dovetailed list, employees will accumulate seniority along with leave and vacation banks which they can activate if they obtain a regular position.

### **LTD/WCB**

Members on LTD or WCB who are laid-off can either receive their displacement notices along with other laid off members, or upon their return to work. If they choose a position by August 28 and are not yet able to return to work, the position will be posted and filled as a temporary vacancy as per the collective agreement.

### **Private employers**

VIHA will encourage private, long-term care operators to provide employment opportunities to laid-off workers.

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