



Newsletter

Health employers appeal Dorsey awards on implementation of the 37.5-hour work week

IN A MOVE guaranteed to cause further havoc throughout B.C.'s hospitals and long-term care facilities, health employers are now appealing an arbitrator's decision regarding the implementation of the 37.5-hour work week imposed by Bill 37.

That decision determined the longer work week will commence this fall and workers covered by local Memoranda of Understanding will be paid overtime from April 29 for working the extra hours.

Following the original decision, Arbitrator James Dorsey further clarified, in a second award, that employers could only implement the longer work week within a 14-day period between September 30 and October 13, 2004. Employers were set to implement the new work week on July 29.

The appeal calls for both the original award and the clarification award to be set aside.

"From an operational perspective, this appeal makes no sense," says HEU assistant secretary-business manager Zorica Bossancic. "There are practical issues involved in rescheduling tens of thousands of front-line workers in hundreds of health care facilities across the province – and it will take time to resolve those issues."

Bossancic says health employers are shirking their obligation to take a rational and effective approach to Bill 37's implementation issues – one that works to minimize damage and stabilize the system rather than increase uncertainty and disruption.

HEU wrote to the Health Employers Association of B.C. seeking a commitment that there be no retroactive clawback should the employer win in the appeal.

Bossancic says employers should not use the appeal to cause further financial hardship for front-line health care workers and their families.

"HEU members have had enough of retroactive clawbacks," she says.

The LRB is currently reviewing the employers' application and will advise the union and the employer as to the next steps in the appeal process.

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