



Bargaining Bulletin

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

THE HEART OF HEALTH CARE

Health unions charge HEABC with unfair labour practices

Complaint focuses on intimidating letters sent to local union stewards and executive members about possible job action

HEU AND ITS UNION partners have filed a complaint against the Health Employers Association of B.C. at the Labour Relations Board alleging unfair labour practices stemming from a series of intimidating letters sent to all employees, local stewards and executive members at many worksites starting in mid-March.

The complaint to the LRB centres on advice given to health employers by HEABC that they communicate by letter to all employees and by letter and meetings with local activists with an intimidating message about the employers' expectation that no illegal withdrawal of services occur. In many instances, those letters were put on the files of stewards and local executive members.

In support of its application, the union bargaining association argues that:

- Documentation about possible future discipline is designed to disturb and intimidate employees;
- The employers' action violated the law in that

it attempts to dissuade employees from exercising their legal right to support a strike;

- The communication also implies that employees should be wary and fearful of their own union;
- The communications with stewards represents interference in the administration of the union; and
- The demand in the letters that stewards communicate their agreement within 24 hours is very intimidating and represents a "gimmick" to bind the union to the letters' content.

The unions are asking the LRB to force HEABC to remove these letters from the files of union activists and order health employers to stop engaging in activities of this nature.

"Clearly, these letters were nothing more than a thinly disguised attempt to intimidate our members," says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. "Health employers should spend less time mischief-making in health care facilities and more time coming up with a more reasonable set of bargaining proposals."

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