



Bargaining Bulletin

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

THE HEART OF HEALTH CARE

Comox local takes privatization fight to merchants

Handbills bring home impact of economic loss to community

HEU members of the Comox local have adopted a creative new strategy to resist privatization: they're showing local merchants how much money they'll lose if health care jobs are contracted out.

The local has designed a series of handbills for HEU members, their partners and children to distribute at local restaurants, stores and other businesses in their community. The handbills are addressed to the owner/manager of the business. The health care worker bill reads as follows:

OWNER/MANAGER:

Today I spent \$ _____ here.

I am a health care worker, one of about 700 members of the Hospital Employees' Union in the Comox Valley.

The Vancouver Island Health Authority has contracted out housekeeping and food services in Nanaimo, Duncan and Victoria and is laying off 1021 HEU members. They plan to do the same on the North Island. Laid off

workers will be replaced by contract workers earning, in wages and benefits, about 50% of what HEU members earn.

As well, health employers are demanding huge concessions from health care workers.

Regrettably, if my job is contracted out or my wages are severely reduced, you will lose some or all of my business.

HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt praises the handbill idea, calling it an effective way to bring home the economic realities of contracting out to local communities and gain support at the same time.

"We strongly encourage all HEU members to adopt such strategies of resistance," says Allnutt.

"The impact of contracting out and driving down wages is felt by everyone in the community, not just us."

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