



Bargaining Bulletin

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

THE HEART OF HEALTH CARE

Day Two: Health care workers on the line

Full scale pickets up across the province

AS B.C. health care workers launch full-scale picket lines at hospitals and long-term care facilities across the province in their fight for a fair contract that protects health services and decent jobs, Victoria appears to be holding off on legislation that would order HEU members back to work.

Although health minister Colin Hansen has said he will ask for legislation if he thinks it's required, both he and labour minister Graham Bruce are now indicating that a negotiated settlement is their preferred option and labour ministry officials say they have no plans for legislation at this time.

"We remain ready to return to negotiations to discuss meaningful ways to protect health services for all British Columbians and maintain decent jobs in communities across the province," says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt.

"Our goal has always been to reach a fair contract at the bargaining table," he says. "But health employers have barred the way to productive talks by their continued refusal to put contracting-out and layoffs on hold during collective bargaining."

Community and labour groups came together at hospitals throughout the province Sunday afternoon to lend support to striking health care workers. Rallies and protest gatherings in all regions saw community and labour supporters voice their opposition to government policies that are dismantling public health care.

At Vancouver General Hospital, several community and labour leaders spoke out.

Rudy Lawrence, president of the Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations and Phil Lyons, co-chair of the Seniors' Network BC, warned the Campbell Liberals that their mean-spirited attack on health services to seniors and the

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sign up for e-mail @www.heu.org

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resulting chaos in home support and residential care won't be forgotten by seniors and their families.

Bev Meslo of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (BC) and BC Health Coalition coordinator Terrie Hendrickson criticized the disproportionately negative impact of health care restructuring on the women and families who are receiving and delivering health care services.

B.C. Federation of Labour president Jim Sinclair urged government to let collective bargaining run its course and stay away from back-to-work legislation. B.C. Nurses' Union president Debra MacPherson said nurses stand with HEU

workers and won't do their work while their co-workers walk picket lines.

And BCGEU president George Heyman echoed the call for a negotiated settlement. He warned against HEABC's misguided pursuit of massive concessions saying health employers have admitted that cost-cutting and rollbacks are more about profits than patient and resident care.

As job action continues, members are reminded to stay in touch with their local executives and check out the HEU website for updated information.

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