



# Bargaining Bulletin

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

THE HEART OF HEALTH CARE

## Province-wide support continues to build on protest lines

*Press reports show anger at Bill 37, solidarity with HEU growing in regions*

**W**ITH AS many as 20,000 CUPE members joining the protest lines on Day Six of HEU's job action, support for front-line health care workers continued to build around the province on Friday, with members of the public and other trade unions speaking out against the B.C. Liberals' regressive Bill 37.

Reports from today's editions of B.C. newspapers showed a movement gathering strength and momentum on the eve of International Workers' Day.

CUPE BC president Barry O'Neill predicted that all 70,000 of his union's members would be on the streets by Monday, for their Day of Action in all BC communities.

Meanwhile, more and more people are joining HEU members on the protest lines.

On Vancouver Island:

CUPE Local 606 representing support staff workers withdrew their services at School District 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) and School District 69 (Cowichan Valley) in a political protest against "the government's regressive legislation against the HEU;"

At Greater Victoria schools, about 1,500 school bus drivers, teaching assistants, custodians and clerical staff planned a walkout to protest Bill 37. "It's an injury to all workers," CUPE spokesman Ian McLean said. "If the expectation is that they can do this to one group of workers in the hospitals...who's next?"

In the North:

Unionized workers in Fort St. John, including teachers and BC Government and Service Employees' Union members, joined local HEU staff, said the

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Alaska Highway News, “in an act of solidarity that saw as many as 150 unionized workers protesting the provincial government”;

BC Hydro workers walked off the job at power generation facilities at the W.A.C. Bennett and Peace Canyon dams in Hudson’s Hope. “It looks to me as though most of the people at BC Hydro, the IBW workers right across the province, are following suit, amongst many other union members,” Wayne McIvor of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers told Canadian Press;

About 22 members of the IBW, local 258, walked off the job in Prince George to support HEU.

**In the Interior:**

Despite being ordered back to work, some members of the BCNU and HSA joined HEU members and other trade unionists on the protest line in Penticton. “Legislated settlements are not good for anybody,” Garry Litke, president of the Okanagan Skaha Teachers’ Union, told the local Herald;

The Daily Courier in Kelowna reported: “hundreds of workers lined up in front of KGH at various times on Thursday, carrying signs and shouting ‘We won’t back down’ and ‘Hell no, we won’t go’. It was a raucous protest, punctuated by supporters pounding their car horns as they drove by and bullhorns blaring encouragement from the union leaders, including people

from CUPE and other unions.”

HEU members in Kamloops were joined on the lawn of Royal Inland Hospital by members of CUPE, the United Steelworkers of America and CUPW. Ruth McDiarmid, president of the Kamloops District Labour Council, said that other unions were being encouraged to support the HEU in its protest.

**In the Kootenays:**

LPN Sandy Huggett told the Trail Daily Times that support from other local unions has been strong. “They are telling us that if we are legislated back, all we have to do is call for help and we will really have a picket line in place,” said Huggett. Greater Trail’s largest union is committed to helping the health workers “in any way we can,” Armindo Demederios, vice-president of Steelworkers Local 480, told the Times;

Tami Broughton, HEU chair of the East Kootenay Regional Hospital (EKRH) local, was quoted in the Cranbrook Daily Townsman as saying that striking workers remained “upbeat and positive”, and that HEU members were being joined on the protest lines by workers from BCNU, HSA, CUPE “and other unions helping to fill out the lines.”

**April 30, 2004**