



Newsletter

IHA scraps privatization plans in favor of in-house laundry

THE INTERIOR HEALTH AUTHORITY'S decision to build a stand-alone laundry in Salmon Arm, while working toward keeping Nelson's laundry service in-house, is a victory for quality care and an acknowledgement of the importance of retaining skilled, experienced workers in B.C.'s health care system, says the Hospital Employees' Union.

Although the region's consolidation plan will still displace 50 FTEs, HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt says it is a "forward-thinking decision" that breaks the privatization mold in the Interior and challenges other health authorities to do the same.

"This decision validates what we've been saying all along – privatization isn't worth it. It doesn't save money, and it comes at much too high of a cost for patients, workers and local communities," he says.

"It's not too late for Vancouver Coastal to preserve Delta's Tilbury Laundry or for the Vancouver Island Health Authority to scrap any plans to extend privatization into northern Vancouver Island," adds Allnutt.

Today's decision completes the IHA's section 54 process, which began early in the new year. Between then and now, HEU members in the Interior and the Kootenays had mounted a tenacious fight to preserve in-house laundry services and protect decent jobs.

As part of IHA's consolidation plan, a new laundry facility will be built in Salmon Arm that will provide services for most of the region's hospitals and long-term care homes. The Nelson plant will remain in operation to provide services throughout the Kootenays, and will be re-assessed in a year's time.

All in-house laundry jobs will remain with HEU members and will be located in Salmon Arm and Nelson.

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