



# Newsletter

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## **VCHA board faces questions about Sodexho strike**

**H**EU members from several VCHA hospitals took their message of “fair wages for Sodexho workers” to the health authority board meeting on October 19 in Richmond.

Three food services workers from UBC and Vancouver General hospitals and GF Strong Rehab Centre told board members about their low wages, high staff turnover and heavy workloads – and the impact these working conditions have on patient care.

HEU member Shelly Prasad, a food services worker from UBC, told the board that “90 per cent of Sodexho’s workforce in the VCHA are paid only \$10.15 an hour.

“Our wages are among the lowest in the country,” she said. “What is Vancouver Coastal Health doing to ensure that [Sodexho] workers are fairly paid and that patients and residents receive quality care?”

Prasad and her Sodexho co-workers were supported by speakers from the HEU VGH local, the BC Nurses’ Union and the BC Health Coalition. All urged the health authority to press Sodexho to return to the bargaining table with a decent wage offer for its employees who have been on strike for five weeks.

VCHA chief executive officer Ida Goodreau said that “we are committed to using our influence with Sodexho to ensure a satisfactory contract...”

Goodreau added that it is “a very, very important principle with us” that all who work in the health authority’s facilities regardless of employer, “are part of the health care system.”

October 19, 2005

