



Newsletter

700 privatized hospital cleaning workers join HEU

Evergreen care home workers also choose HEU

NEARLY 700 employees of Aramark, a US-based corporation contracted to provide hospital cleaning services in the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, have voted 84 per cent in favour of joining the Hospital Employees' Union.

The new HEU members work at more than 30 health care facilities in the region, including at major hospitals like St. Paul's, Vancouver General, Lion's Gate and Richmond.

Although workers cast their ballots on union membership almost nine months ago, the ballot count was held up until today while the Labour Relations Board dealt with a series of objections filed by Aramark and the Industrial Wood and Allied Workers (IWA) union.

And after waiting more than a year, 40 employees of the British multinational Compass Group who work at Evergreen Care Home in White Rock have overwhelmingly voted in favour of joining HEU.

"All these workers have been forced to wait a long time for their choices to be respected," says HEU acting secretary-business manager Zorica Bosancic. "Our job now is to work with our new members and the private contractors to bring greater stability to the workforce and improve the quality of patient care."

Bosancic says the Aramark employees will be holding their first bargaining conference February 26. In preparation, the new union members will be electing site representatives and delegates to the bargaining conference over the next three weeks.

The Aramark employees are the second group of workers in Vancouver Coastal to join HEU in recent weeks. In late November nearly 800 food service workers – employees of the French corporation Sodexho – voted to join HEU by a margin of 90 per cent.

More than 1500 other privatized cleaning and food services workers – employed by Sodexho, U.K.-based Compass Group, and Aramark – are still waiting for their votes to be counted.

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