



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

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Bill 18 should die on order paper, says HEU

[BURNABY, B.C.] - The Hospital Employees' Union is urging the B.C. Liberals to abandon last-minute legislation changing health care bargaining units.

Bill 18, the Health Authorities Amendment Act, was introduced on March 4 and would transfer about 9,000 licensed practical nurses between three different health care bargaining associations.

Despite its significant impact on issues like health care delivery, management of nursing resources, and collective agreement rights, the provincial government failed to consult in advance.

The health minister has said her officials will initiate consultation, but not until the bill has been made law.

But HEU secretary-business manager Bonnie Pearson questions whether this meets their legal obligation to engage in meaningful consultation that was established in 2007 when the B.C. Liberal government lost a Charter challenge to *Bill 29*, legislation it passed in 2002.

“The minister’s actions are not just disappointing, but also disrespectful of the diverse team that delivers health care to British Columbians,” says Pearson.

“She has had every opportunity to consult with our union and others affected by her government’s legislation but chose not to ask, or to listen,” says Pearson.

Bill 18 passed second reading in the legislature on Tuesday and is expected to be brought forward for final stages of debate later today.

The legislation would transfer LPNs from both the Facilities Bargaining Association and Community Bargaining Association to the Nurses Bargaining Association.

Bill 18 does not affect union representation rights for about 7,000 LPNs who are currently members of the BC Nurses Union.

But it could have significant impact on about 2,000 LPNs who are members of HEU and other unions in long-term care facilities, some hospitals and in the community.

In addition, the Bill could undermine ten years of policy work that have increased LPN numbers and utilization.

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Contact: Mike Old, HEU communications director, 604-828-6771 (mobile)

