



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWS RELEASE

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SEPTEMBER 27, 2013

Lower Mainland health support workers deliver overwhelming strike mandate

U.S.-based Aramark and HEU head back to bargaining table next week

[Burnaby, B.C.] Health care workers employed by US-based Aramark in housekeeping services voted 97 per cent in favour of strike action, according to results released today by the Hospital Employees' Union.

Strike votes were taken at 33 sites covering nearly 1,300 health care workers between Sept. 16 and 26. HEU members work for Aramark at acute care and long-term care facilities in the Fraser Health Authority and the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority.

Meanwhile, HEU and Aramark will be heading back to the bargaining table on Monday, Sept. 30 to restart negotiations. Mediator Vince Ready will assist both sides.

"HEU members working for Aramark have given their bargaining committee a very strong strike mandate," says HEU spokesperson Bonnie Pearson.

"If Aramark wants to get an agreement with our members, they have to get serious about addressing the compensation issues that have dominated negotiations from day one. Our members want to see progress."

Negotiation with Aramark regarding essential service levels are close to conclusion. At that point, HEU and its members will be in a position to take job action, if there is no progress made at the bargaining table.

Multinationals Aramark, Acciona, Sodexo, Compass and Compass' subsidiary Marquise employ over 4,400 dietary and housekeeping workers in health care throughout B.C. Contracts for these workers expired nearly a year ago and none of the employees have received a raise since Sept. 2011.

The four corporations benefited from a wave of health care privatization that saw over 8,000 workers unjustly laid off by the BC Liberal government and wages cut in half a decade ago. All four companies posted global profits of over three billion dollars in their last year of reported earnings. Aramark recorded \$82 million in profits in 2012.

Strike votes for over 1,400 HEU members working for Compass and their subsidiary Marquise will conclude on Oct. 3. Results will be released Oct. 4. Sodexo reached a tentative agreement with HEU bargainers on Sept. 15.

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