



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWS RELEASE

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VIHA changes contractors, unleashes new round of layoffs

Health authority should force new contractor to hire existing staff, says HEU

The Hospital Employees' Union has learned that the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) is set to announce that it is changing its housekeeping and food services contractor at a number of its long-term care sites on the South Island.

It's a move that will cause significant disruption in the delivery of these services as hundreds of experienced workers employed by Compass Canada are expected to receive lay-off notices.

HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy says the health authority should make the new contractor take on current employees in order to minimize the disruption of services to patients and residents.

"Throwing hundreds of experienced workers on the street will just lead to chaos in the delivery of services in extended care settings," says Darcy.

"If VIHA was serious about doing what's best for patients and residents, they would insist that the new contractor hire current workers."

Today, VIHA is expected to announce that Marquise Group has been awarded contracts to provide food and housekeeping services at seven different care facilities on the South Island – Saanich Peninsula Hospital, Queen Alexandra Children's Hospital, Gorge Road Hospital, and the four sites of Juan de Fuca (Aberdeen Hospital, Glengarry Hospital, Mt. Tolmie Hospital and Priory Hospital).

Compass employees were informed of the news today. More than 350 of them will be laid off in six months when Marquise assumes the contract. The vast majority of the workers impacted are women.

On March 18, Compass lost its contract to provide housekeeping at Royal Jubilee Hospital to Acciona. More than 200 HEU members were given six-month lay-off notice as a result.

Darcy says the union will ensure that existing collective agreement provisions for layoff and bumping are enforced for laid-off workers and are prepared to work with the new contractor to find ways of retaining current staff.

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