



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JUNE 12, 2014

HEU support services workers united for a fair deal with Sodexo in Abbotsford

[Abbotsford, B.C.] Today, health care workers and their supporters rallied for a fair contract and better health care at Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre (ARHCC).

According to HEU secretary-business manager Bonnie Pearson, these members continue to struggle under Sodexo's low wages and poor working conditions. The French-multinational was contracted by Access Health Ltd. in 2008, the corporation that runs ARHCC, to deliver support services when the privately-operated facility opened.

“Since privatized health care services were introduced to this province in the last decade, hundreds of millions of dollars have gone into the coffers of multinational corporations like Sodexo who have profited from low wages and reduced service levels for patients,” says Pearson.

“In addition, workloads for our members have increased significantly over the years at ARHCC, as patient demand has pushed health care delivery into the hallways at the hospital.”

“Porters make more patient moves, housekeepers do more bed cleans, dietary prepares more meals and helpdesk takes more calls, yet Sodexo does not add extra hours or extra help to cope with the demand,” says HEU member and Sodexo housekeeper Sandra Neuls.

More than 240 HEU members work in support services for Sodexo and have been without a contract since May 2013. Workers have not seen a wage increase for 20 months and total compensation for most falls below the \$17.02 an hour living wage for the Fraser Valley.

“Retaining an experienced, well-trained workforce is critical to maintaining patient health and safety,” says Pearson. “But low wages and difficult working conditions contribute to high staff turnover and less experience on the floor – it’s time Sodexo tabled a fair deal for these health care workers.”

Bargaining resumes between HEU and Sodexo on June 16.

-30-

Contact: Neil Monckton
HEU communications officer
604-209-3814 (cell), 604-456-7137 (work)

