



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

# NEWSLETTER

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## Laws that protect workers must be strengthened, says HEU

The Hospital Employees' Union recently met with officials from the B.C. Ministry of Labour to suggest improvements to legislation protecting workers in British Columbia.

Current laws leave many workers vulnerable. For example, a person working full-time at B.C.'s minimum wage does not earn enough to break even with the poverty line.

And unionized employees are exempt from many of the core provisions of the Employment Standards Act – giving employers the legal right to try to bargain below existing minimum standards.

“Employment standards legislation ought to provide reasonable minimum conditions for all workers,” says HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy.

“But the B.C. Liberals gutted this legislation in 2002, depriving workers of basic rights and making it more difficult for them to enforce the rights that they still have.”

The Ministry of Labour recently engaged in informal consultations on employment standards. HEU along with its union and community partners advocated for a number of changes to employment standards that include:

- a rational minimum wage
- returning employment standard protections for unionized workers
- more accessible enforcement mechanisms
- improved overtime and hours of work provisions
- application of the legislation to more workers

*January 4, 2011*

