



Union says members' rights disregarded in Lower Mainland Integration

Issues referred to third party "troubleshooter"

HEU and the multi-union Facilities Bargaining Association say that B.C.'s health employers are disregarding the collective agreement rights of health care workers as they reorganize services.

As a result, the FBA informed employers on June 10 that a number of issues related to so-called Lower Mainland Integration and other service consolidations will be referred to a third party under the provisions of the Facilities Collective Agreement.

HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy says that the union hopes to force health employers to adopt a more collaborative and transparent approach to changes which involve the transfer of thousands of members from one health authority or agency to another.

"So far, the consolidation of services in the Lower Mainland is causing high levels of anxiety among our members," says Darcy.

"This is totally unnecessary. Our unions have invested a lot of time and effort – during the last round of bargaining and since – to ensure that the substantial reorganization of services that is taking place can be accomplished with minimal disruption to employees and service delivery."

Last spring at the bargaining table, more than a week was committed to working out language on service transfers and subsequently unions and health employers agreed to a "standard template agreement" to facilitate these transfers.

"We have made every effort to find solutions that would ease the transition and now we've taken the further step of asking an industry trouble shooter to assist the parties," says Darcy.

"Nevertheless, we remain willing to resolve the outstanding issues in a manner that respects the work and the rights of our members."

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There are a number of issues that are of concern to the unions which include:

- Failure to disclose accurate lists of affected employees.
- Treatment of employees returning from LTD.
- Failure to disclose lists of employees in “duty to accommodate” agreements.
- Failure to produce local agreements that affect members working conditions and benefits.
- Failure to identify integrated positions and plans to deal with these positions.
- Treatment of service and benefit banks in a manner inconsistent with the collective agreement.
- Failure to provide a seamless transfer for employees returning to the sending employer.
- Failure to properly negotiate and respect transfer agreements.

Lower Mainland Integration and the consolidation of services to Health Shared Services BC impacts members in areas like IMITS, switchboard, supply chain, technology services, accounting and payroll, diagnostic imaging, and health information management.

These issues also have an impact for members affected by potential future transfer in areas like Pharmacy and Lab.

Under the collective agreement, the FBA unions can send issues to an industry “troubleshooter” which must hold a hearing into the matter on an expedited basis.

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