



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hundreds of health care workers transfer from private companies back to the public sector

[Burnaby, B.C.] – Today, the Hospital Employees' Union (HEU) welcomes the transfer of 720 privatized housekeepers and food services workers back into public services, under the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (VCHA) and Fraser Health Authority (FHA).

A total of 526 hospital food service workers from Vancouver General Hospital, UBC Hospital and Purdy Pavilion, GF Strong Rehabilitation Centre, George Pearson Centre, Dogwood Lodge, Richmond General Hospital, Minoru Residence, Richmond Lions Manor, and Bridge House are returning to Vancouver Coastal Health today.

Another 194 health care workers in housekeeping and food services are also returning in-house today in the Fraser Health Authority. These workers are employed at Mission Memorial Hospital and The Residence in Mission, Heritage Village, Cottage Worthington Pavilion, Fraser Canyon Hospital and Fraser Hope Lodge, Holmberg House Hospice, and Cypress, Cottonwood and Connolly Lodges.

These transfers are a result of Bill 47 and the government's commitment to reverse the previous government's health care privatization policies, which saw hospital support services contracted out to for-profit, multinational corporations.

“The privatization policies of the previous B.C. Liberal government devastated the lives of thousands of workers in a sector that was overwhelmingly female and highly racialized,” says HEU secretary-business manager Meena Brisard.

“It fragmented health care delivery, undermined wages and working conditions, and made our hospitals less safe for workers, residents and patients.”

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Since August 2021, when the provincial government announced its plans to end 21 commercial contracts for housekeeping and food services in health care facilities across the province, health authorities have begun bringing workers back in-house.

“Today’s repatriation of these health care workers back into the public sector is the result of nearly 20 years of campaigning by our members for a better health care system,” says Brisard.

Housekeepers and dietary workers coming back under the health authorities will be covered by the province-wide Facilities collective agreement, and will see improvements to their wages and benefits.

“For workers, returning in-house means that we’re finally respected and valued for the vital work that we do,” says Clarissa Hicap, a Dietary Worker at Vancouver Hospital for 18 years, and HEU shop steward, whose job is transferring back in-house today.

“It also means greater stability and security for our jobs, making it easier for workers to stay working in health care.”

HEU is B.C.’s largest health union representing more than 60,000 workers in various health occupations and settings, including more than 4,000 contracted support services workers, currently and previously employed by multinational corporations under contract to Vancouver Coastal Health, Vancouver Island Health, Fraser Health and the Provincial Health Services authorities.