



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWSLETTER

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Privatized hospital cafeteria workers in Fraser Health will return to the public service

Hospital cafeteria workers in Fraser Health Authority are the latest group of privatized health care support workers confirmed to return to the public sector.

By the early summer of 2023, nearly 100 cafeteria and retail workers at Peace Arch, Eagle Ridge, Ridge Meadows, Burnaby, Surrey Memorial, Royal Columbian, and Langley Memorial hospitals will be employed by the Fraser Health Authority.

Currently employed by Compass Canada—a private, multinational company—these workers will be covered by the Facilities Collective Agreement when they return to the public service, joining 60,000 other health care workers across the province.

This means immediate improvements to wages and benefits, and access to a pension plan for these hospital cafeteria and retail workers.

“We’re heartened by this latest action from the provincial government to remove private contractors from hospitals,” says Meena Brisard, HEU secretary-business manager. “This move recognizes that a reunited health care team will ensure more effective coordination of health care services, less turnover and more security for workers, and ultimately, a more stable health care system.”

In August 2021, the province’s health minister, Adrian Dix, announced that more than 4,000 housekeeping and dietary staff in health care facilities, employed by private companies under 21 contracts, would return under the employ of health authorities.

This announcement reverses nearly two decades of health care privatization and contracting out under the BC Liberal government, which saw thousands of health care workers fired from family-supporting jobs, and forced to re-apply for those same jobs under private contractors at half the wage.

Though hospital cafeteria and retail workers were contracted out to private companies in the early 2000s, these jobs were not included in the government’s August 2021 announcement to repatriate workers.

“Returning cafeteria jobs into the public service, alongside thousands of housekeepers and food service workers, demonstrates that the provincial government is committed to correcting failed privatization policies of the past,” says Brisard. “This work would not

have happened without ongoing advocacy and action by HEU members throughout the years for better jobs and a better health care system.”

HEU will work collaboratively with FHA to ensure a smooth transfer of hospital cafeteria workers back into the health authority under the negotiated Labour Adjustment and Transfer Agreement—the framework used to transfer thousands of workers back in-house since 2021.

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