



Privatized lab transport services to end on Vancouver Island

Union secures agreement with Vancouver Island Health Authority to bring transportation for lab services fully in-house starting May 1

On Feb. 15, the Hospital Employees' Union and the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) signed an agreement to create 38 new full-time equivalent, health authority positions in lab transportation, as part of bringing this service under the direct control of the health authority beginning in May.

Lab transport services had been contracted by VIHA to outside companies including Life Labs and private courier services. Starting May 1, this private delivery of health support services will end and 40 new HEU members will officially join the Facilities subsector team under the renewed 2022-2025 Facilities Bargaining Association Agreement.

“Bringing this service into Island Health will improve collaboration within the health care system and ensure services are timely, stable, and available to the health care team,” said HEU secretary-business manager Meena Brisard. “It also continues the work of reversing nearly two decades of health care privatization and contracting out under the previous BC Liberal government.”

The selection of positions will take place in three phases. First, all regular employees with VIHA working currently in the Driver I - Transportation Attendant I job class will have the opportunity to fill the first section of lines by seniority on the new schedule.

Over the next phase, affected Life Labs transportation employees may accept a position with Island Health and select a line in order of seniority, as per the agreement's recognition of certain rights for these workers. In the final phase, any remaining vacancies will be posted as per the Facilities collective agreement and available to all Facilities subsector employees in VIHA.

“Since August 2021, more than 4,000 privatized cleaning and dietary workers across the province have reunited or are reuniting with the health care team under the Facilities collective agreement, and they will soon be joined by lab transportation workers on the Island,” said Brisard. “The ongoing advocacy and action of HEU members means that health care workers – no matter where they work -- are being brought together.”

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