

BULLETIN

HSA demands investigation into unnecessary layoffs at Vancouver Hospital lab

October 1, 1998

The union that represents lab technologists at VH wants to know why after laying off 70 lab techs last year, the hospital is advertising those same jobs in the Calgary Herald and Edmonton Journal.

The Health Sciences Association of BC, the union representing more than 2,600 lab technologists across BC, is calling for an investigation into the events that led to the layoff of 70 lab technologists at Vancouver Hospital in 1997. The layoffs were recommended by a American consulting firm hired by the hospital and resulted in many lab techs being forced to choose between severance, early retirement or finding a new career. Now, only one year later, the hospital is advertising those same jobs in the Calgary Herald and Edmonton Journal.

"At the time of the layoffs, our union warned the cuts were too deep and the lab would not be able to cope with demand," says HSA President Cindy Stewart. "Obviously the hospital has realized they made a big mistake. But rather than admit it, they are secretly recruiting lab technologists from Alberta."

Stewart says the union wants to know how many health care dollars Vancouver Hospital wasted on consultant fees, severance and early retirement as a result of this botched exercise. HSA also wants to know why the hospital is advertising these jobs in Alberta newspapers, but not the Vancouver Sun or Province.

"Vancouver Hospital should just come clean and admit that made a costly mistake," says Stewart. "Last year's layoffs wreaked havoc on our members' lives and cost taxpayers thousands of dollars. There should be an immediate investigation into why Vancouver Hospital repeatedly ignored warnings that the cuts would jeopardize lab services at the hospital."

Stewart says she intends to raise the issue with both the Ministry of Health and the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board. The union will also demand that Vancouver Hospital work with HSA to determine the actual number of lab technologists required to operate the lab properly.

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