

BULLETIN

Community social services: Employment security means stability and quality services for clients and families

October 21, 2010

Employment security will enhance stability and quality services for the people who need them in a time of tremendous change and government cuts. The Health Sciences Association and other unions representing more than 15,000 community social services workers have made employment security and continuity of services a centrepiece of the bargaining associations proposals at the bargaining table.

The unions' proposals on employment security include:

- Renewal and enhancement of the continuity of service and employment agreement;
- A workable lay-off process with an emphasis on retaining senior workers with the most experience;
- A clear job selection process that is fair and also supports retaining experienced employees.

The continuity of service and employment agreement protects both workers and the people they support when government re-tenders service contracts. Generally, under such an agreement, workers follow the work and do not see a loss of seniority, wages or benefits. The process is meant to be seamless for the people who depend on these services.

Hundreds of frontline workers have been laid-off as the provincial government cuts the already strained budgets of community-based agencies. Community Living BC, a major funder, is driving an anti-worker agenda, seeking to privatize services and return the sector to a low wage ghetto with no health and safety protections. The Ministry for Children and Family Development has cut millions of dollars from programs, eliminating jobs and cutting services to vulnerable children, youth and families in BC. The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General is preparing to re-tender dozens of contracts for programs that support women and children experiencing violence.

At a time of great uncertainty, cutbacks and lay-offs, employment security is necessary for workers. But it also supports the very people who use and need community-based social services in BC. But, after a year of talks, employers -- represented by the Liberal government's Community Social Services Employers' Association -- refuse to discuss employment security.

An open letter to employers has been posted at: www.cssfairdeal.ca

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