



Questions and answers about Lower Mainland Biomedical Engineering consolidation

November 8, 2011

Q: What is the Lower Mainland Biomedical Engineering (LM BME) consolidation project?

At the direction of the Ministry of Health in 2009, the health authorities were given areas to consolidate services in an attempt to save costs. Providence was given responsibility for merging Lower Mainland Biomedical Engineering services from three health authorities -- Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, Fraser Health Authority, Provincial Health Services Authority -- into Providence Health Care. Providence was appointed the lead authority to amalgamate services and to reduce the Lower Mainland Biomedical Engineering operational budget by 10 per cent.

There have already been some operational changes at the senior excluded management positions.

â€¢ Providence has now turned its attention to changes that will affect front-line staff.

â€¢ Providence has already addressed the requirement to reduce the operating budget by the targeted 10 per cent by cancelling service contracts with outside contractors.

The Providence proposal is to:

â€¢ transfer Fraser Health, Provincial Health, and Vancouver Coastal Health Lower Mainland BME employees to Providence Health Care;

â€¢ implement a new organizational structure; standardize classifications and job descriptions;

â€¢ consolidate seniority lists;

â€¢ review cross-site work distribution; establish cross-site positions; and

â€¢ potentially change the hours of operation to meet servicing needs.

We acknowledge that standardization of classifications will call into review the work that is currently being performed by HSA members in non-BMET classifications, as well as current BMET classifications.

Q: Has HSA received the proposed labour adjustment plan for LM BME consolidation from Providence?

No, we have not. But Providence is required to provide this plan under Section 54 of the BC Labour Code. HSA intends to meet with our HSA committee November 9, 2011 and then meet with the employer on November 14, 16 and 18th.

Q: Will Fraser Health, Provincial Health, or Vancouver Coastal Health still be my employer?

Providence is making employment decisions that signify that they are the true employer. Our negotiations with Providence will determine the composition of seniority lists, and employees rights for access to postings. HSA will be negotiating options for employees to mitigate effects.

Q: Will there be any displacements?

There are no job losses associated with the changes.

Q: What is Section 54 notice?

Under Section 54 of BCs labour statute, the employer is obligated to inform the union of any intention to introduce changes affecting a significant number of employees.

Section 54 states: -If an employer introduces or intends to introduce a measure, policy, practice or change that affects the terms, conditions or security of employment of a significant number of employees to whom a collective agreement applies... the employer must give notice to the trade union that is party to the collective agreement at least 60 days before the date on which the measure, policy, practice or change is to be effected."

For the employers plans for Lower Mainland Biomedical Engineering consolidation, the respective health authorities served Section 54 notice to HSA on September 28, 2011. The Section 54 notice from the employer encompasses changes or transfers between various sites that could affect staffing levels, shift rotations, changes in classifications, number of full-time equivalents (FTEs), and skill mix.

Q: What areas of LM BME are considered for consolidation?

HSA understands that all areas of BMET are being considered for consolidation.

Q: How will my seniority be affected?

HSA supports a single seniority list in a consolidated system for all of Lower Mainland Biomedical Engineering. Seniority is an earned benefit ... earned by our members in recognition for their years of commitment to their work. It can be objectively measured, and has significant impact on career paths, mobility, and job security. As employer structures evolve and change, we must adapt in ways that preserve the importance and significance of seniority.

Q: What is red-circling?

Red-circling protects the pay of members whose jobs are downgraded following, for example, a restructuring. Rather than experiencing an immediate loss of pay, the members pay is frozen at their previous, higher rate -- until such time as the new pay rate catches up with the salary.

Q: What if I am already red-circled from a previous labour adjustment?

If you are affected by Lower Mainland Biomedical Engineering consolidation and have been previously red-circled, please inform your union labour relations officer and human resources representative.

Q: I work at two sites. Will I still get paid overtime?

We will need to discuss this directly with the employer, but HSA has negotiated overtime waivers in other consolidated structures. This waiver is for employees working at an additional site where they hold a different employee number.

For example, in other consolidated structures, if a member works at Surrey Memorial Hospital and Mission Hospital, they continue to earn overtime at each site separately. At the end of a designated period of time, all hours worked beyond the normal scheduled daily or weekly hours, regardless of site, will attract overtime pay.

Q: When will the new organizational structure be implemented?

The employers target date for implementation is February 3, 2012.

Your HSA committee members:

• Dave Noga, biomedical engineering technologist, St. Pauls Hospital / Providence Health

• Britt Parish, senior biomedical engineering technologist, BC Childrens Hospital / Provincial Health Services Authority

• Paul Kuwabara, senior biomedical engineering technologist, Surrey Memorial Hospital / Fraser Health Authority

• Ron Fyffe, biomedical engineering technologist, Vancouver General Hospital / Vancouver Coastal Health

• Richard Marshall, biomedical engineering technologist, Fraser Health Authority / Vancouver Coastal Health Authority

• Dani Demetlika, HSA Senior Labour Relations Officer: ddemetlika@hsabc.org

Dan Parent, HSA Labour Relations Officer: dparent@hsabc.org

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180 East Columbia
New Westminster, BC V3L 0G7

Website
www.hsabc.org

Telephone 604-517-0994
1-800-663-2017