

BULLETIN

HSA fights layoffs at GF Strong

June 1, 2000

The Report: June / July 2000 vol.21 num.3

by YUKIE KURAHASHI

HSA is fighting to stop proposed layoffs at GF Strong's Prosthetics and Orthotics Services Lab. The Prosthetics and Orthotics Service provides a comprehensive program where medical specialists, orthotists, prosthetists, technicians, and physical and occupational therapists work together to provide the client with the device that will give the best possible function.

Services are available for people with a variety of physical disabilities and conditions. Devices may include prostheses for arms and legs, myoelectrics (prosthetics that react to electro-muscular impulses), foot orthotics, spinal orthotics, and orthotics for arms and legs.

In April, GF Strong announced plans to cut 3.7 full-time equivalents from the service, drastically reducing the service to 6.4 FTEs.

HSA Membership Services Coordinator Brian McConville says this is an ill-considered move. "The Prosthetics and Orthotics Services provided at GF Strong are an integral part of rehabilitation," he explains. "It provides services to outpatients, and provides consultation and services to inpatients within the acute sector - at inpatient rehab units at GF Strong and Vancouver Hospital.

The service involves a highly collaborative multidisciplinary approach involving physicians, physical therapists, occupational therapists, social workers, prosthetists and orthotists." This type of integrated service is not available in the private sector.

McConville says the proposed layoffs will result in a transfer of service to the private sector, and likely a reduction in the quality of service. "The expertise that has developed in the Prosthetics and Orthotics department at GF Strong may be lost forever," he says. "These proposed changes would have a significant negative impact on service delivery to the most severely disabled population in the province."

McConville also notes that this decision makes little sense, since a general review of rehabilitation services is also currently underway in the health region.

As a positive alternative, HSA plans to meet with CEOs Murray Martin of VGH and John Higgenbottam of BC Rehab to discuss working together to improve and enhance services provided by the Prosthetics and Orthotics department - as well as make it into a source of funding for the hospital. A meeting with Martin has already

been scheduled.

The key is maintaining quality services. Additionally, however, its important to note that this is potentially a revenue generating service." McConville points to a similar service at Kelowna General Hospital, which has been generating revenue for several years.

"Kelowna General Hospital has demonstrated that prosthetics and orthotics can be self-supporting financially, and even generate a profit for the hospital," he notes. "Even after paying the hospital for rent and all other overhead, the service at KGH has sustained a surplus position for eight years. Their net revenue is divided between hospital administration and rehabilitation services, with a portion of the revenue retained by the service for reinvestment in equipment, technology and other expenses as determined by the service."

Type:

[The Report](#)

- [Print](#)
- [PDF](#)

180 East Columbia
New Westminster, BC V3L 0G7

Website
www.hsabc.org

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