

June 26, 2012

Bulletin

BCNU rejects “attendance management” programs

The union is prepared to take legal action against them. Do not attend any attendance meetings with management without your union rep

BCNU is strongly opposed to so-called “attendance management” programs that try to force nurses to come to work when they’re sick, under the threat of intimidation, harassment and discipline.

The union is prepared to take legal action against employers who are implementing these schemes in unacceptable and likely illegal ways.

BCNU president Debra McPherson has written to members in Vancouver Coastal Health where implementation of the program has been particularly objectionable. The health authority cancelled an arbitration on the issue scheduled for April. Without a satisfactory resolution, BCNU is also prepared to put the issue on the provincial bargaining table.

In the letter to Van Coastal members, McPherson says the program “is insulting to nurses and damaging to morale at work because it assumes wrongdoing and threatens harsh penalties.

“Quite simply, this attendance program is leading to a toxic workplace, with management intimidating nurses to come to work although they may be sick. Under our professional standards, we have a clear responsibility not to report to work when sick, in order to protect patients. Our collective agreement allows up to 18 days a year for legitimate illness – an entitlement fairly bargained that BCNU intends to see respected.”

The attendance programs make the amount of sick leave an issue if it’s above an arbitrary threshold of average sick-leave taken by all employees. Unless the threshold is met, employers threaten a restriction of overtime work, reduction to part-time status, or outright firing.

McPherson says “no nurse should ever be forced to disclose deeply personal and confidential health information to managers in an adversarial setting with the threat of punishment hanging over their head!”

If you are summoned to an interview about your attendance, do not attend the meeting without taking your union representative with you to protect your rights.

If you don’t know who your BCNU steward is call us at 604-433-2268 or toll free 1-800-663-9991.

British Columbia Nurses' Union

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