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November 20, 2024

Dear Members;

Member Update: BCEHS North Shore Rescue (NSR) Operational Update

It is with significant disappointment that I must update you on the employer's recent actions, which demonstrate an ongoing disregard for the safety of our members and the integrity of our work. After months of trying to build a cooperative relationship with BCEHS, the union was made aware of an alarming safety incident on June 2, 2024, where BCEHS paramedic crews were put at serious risk during a call with North Shore Rescue (NSR). What makes this even worse is that BCEHS management failed to report this incident to the union or WorkSafe BC, which is both irresponsible and unacceptable.

In addition, on June 13, 2024, the union learned of the employer's intent to contract out our work under the guise of a "practice update" regarding the use of the VGH helipad by NSR. However, we soon discovered that this so-called "update" had actually been in the works for two years. This initiative, which is being pushed forward without meaningful consultation, was designed to align with a self-serving TV production for NSR's own interests. We immediately opposed this attempt to use our crews for a publicity stunt.

The union sent letters to the employer seeking information on [July 15, 2024](#) and [August 14, 2024](#) (attached respectively). We received a reply months later on November 12, 2024 attached [here](#). You will note the response is devoid of substance, and typical of BCEHS's evasive tactics. We continue to receive nothing but vague answers to legitimate questions about the safety and integrity of this program.

In an effort to obtain transparency, the union submitted a request under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, seeking all communications between the employer and NSR.

What we've learned through this process is even more troubling. It appears that a BCEHS EPOS physician, through their dual affiliation with BCEHS and NSR, has been actively promoting SAR/NSR's interests in a way that could undermine public safety and lobbying for changes that could jeopardize the critical care provided by our paramedics. These actions represent a blatant conflict of interest and a direct attack on our profession.

The employer's actions are not just insulting; they are dangerous. Paramedics across the province respond to life-saving emergencies daily, covering nearly 1,000,000 square kilometers of terrain. These efforts are now being undermined by BCEHS, whose lack of respect for our members is clear. The union strongly believes that this new initiative could put patients at risk, disrupt the proper dispatch of paramedics and delay vital care, particularly in cases of auto launch calls where our advanced CCP paramedics are needed to deliver blood products and provide critical patient care in the field.

Despite repeated warnings and safety concerns, an outstanding safety report, failure to action any safety recommendations and advancement of a safety policy grievance raised by the union, BCEHS has decided to move forward with their NSR initiative, effective November 26, 2024. This decision, made without addressing any of the issues we've outlined, further proves that BCEHS has no intention of putting patient care or the

safety of our members first. They have made it clear that our voices don't matter, reducing our paramedics to bag carriers, no longer providing patient care, The union has also learned of the intent to expand this "Initiative" across the province.

The union will continue to fight for the safety of our members and the quality of patient care in this province. We will not be silenced, and we will not allow our work to be undermined by self-serving interests.

In solidarity,



Jason Jackson
Provincial President
Ambulance Paramedics & Emergency Dispatchers of BC
CUPE 873

JJ/sd/MoveUp

