Home Support Repatriation: Questions and Answers for Incoming Staff
September 2019

As part of the ongoing work to transition home support services in-house, Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health have captured the latest questions from employees being repatriated to the health authorities and have provided updated answers below. The following responds to questions around the transition underway and includes information about the Transfer of Employment Agreement.

Q: What is changing?
A:
- After reviewing how we deliver home support services in our regions, Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) and Fraser Health have decided to make changes to improve care coordination and quality. As a result, contracts with existing home support service providers will not be renewed in March 2020 and the health authorities will deliver home support services directly.

Q: What is Home Support?
A:
- Home support services are designed to help people who live at home and need assistance with care needs such as personal hygiene, medication supervision, light meal support, getting in and out of bed and providing respite services for caregivers.
- Home care is provided by nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, case managers and other care providers in an individual’s home rather than in a clinical setting.
- With health authorities providing home support and home care services directly, there is an opportunity to create integrated teams in the future where all staff serving a client are connected and work collaboratively to meet client needs.

Q: How will this impact continuity of care?
A:
- Over time, we intend to increase the number of regular, permanent positions among home support workers to create more stability in the workforce.
- Another goal is to improve scheduling so that home support workers can spend less time travelling between appointments and more time delivering care.

Q: What does this mean for current Home Support Provider employees?
A:
- Individuals who have been serving clients in Fraser Health will continue to work in Fraser Health and likewise for VCH.
- Staff who work for current home support providers will be offered comparable employment (accountabilities, salary, benefits, hours and location of work) with VCH or Fraser Health.
All current home support provider staff who become health authority staff will be guaranteed the same status they currently have with one of the four current providers.

Once you transfer to your health authority, you will be able to apply for posted positions.

Unionized staff

- VCH and Fraser Health have worked with the Health Employer’s Association of BC and unions to complete a Transfer of Employment (TEA) agreement.

Excluded staff

- VCH and Fraser Health have gone through a job matching process for employees currently in excluded positions with contracted service providers. All excluded positions that are transferring to excluded positions with VCH and Fraser Health will maintain the same salary and benefits (other than benefits that may be specific to your employment agreement /contract with the current employer).
- In some cases, the excluded position with the current home support provider does not match with an excluded position at the health authority and will be appropriately matched to a unionized position.

Q: When will I get a job offer?

A:

- Over the course of the summer, Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health sent out a majority of the 3,000 offer letters by mail. The remaining letters will be sent out in fall 2019.
- If you are currently employed by more than one current home support provider and support clients in both Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health, your offer letter will come from the health authority where you work the most (50 per cent and over).

Staff on leave

- If you are on a leave (e.g. sick, maternity, long-term disability, unpaid, or other leave) at the time of transfer, you will remain on leave with your current employer. You will receive an offer letter when you are cleared to return to work or your leave has ended. VCH and Fraser Health are developing a process to let you know who to contact when you are ready to return to work.

Q: Will my benefits carry over?

A:

- When you transfer your employment to one of the health authorities, you will join that health authority’s benefits plan.
- If you are a regular full time employee, the transfer of employment agreement outlines that your benefits are paid by your employer. If you are a casual employee, you can choose to purchase benefits governed through the Health Employer’s Association of BC (HEABC) / Community Bargaining Association (CBA) agreement.
Vacation

- Each health authority has a vacation approval process, beginning in the fall, to schedule vacation for the following calendar year. Specific vacation booking processes will be shared during the individual health authority vacation planning process.

- Vacation years of service will transfer with you to the health authority. For example, if you are entitled to 25 days with your current employer, you will be entitled to 25 days with the health authority.

- Any vacation money earned as of the date you transition from your current provider to VCH or Fraser Health will be paid out to you by your current provider. If you have pre-approved vacation that you wish to take following the transfer, the vacation time will be honoured by the health authority, but as you will already have been paid by your current provider, you will not receive additional vacation pay from VCH or Fraser Health.

- For vacation taken with the health authority during 2019 and 2020, you may wish to consider saving the vacation pay you will receive from the current provider to use during the unpaid vacation you take with the health authority during this time.

Sick Time and Special Leave

- Your sick leave and special leave bank will be transferred to the health authority at the time you transition.

Transportation

- If you currently use public transportation to do your job, you can continue to do so under the transfer agreement. If you use your car, the health authority will pay mileage as per the Collective Agreement.

Q: What does this mean for clients?

A:

- VCH and Fraser Health have been working closely with current home support providers and unions on a plan to transition home support services to the health authorities over the next six to eight months.

- During this time, the highest priority will be to ensure a seamless transition for home support clients—continuing to provide a high level of care and continuity, as well as maintaining client satisfaction. Client schedules will be maintained and wherever possible, they will have the same care worker(s).

Q: What’s next?

A:

Phase 1

During the first phase of the transition, our focus will be on ensuring a smooth transition for home support provider staff and our clients. Schedules and staff paired with the same clients will be maintained to the best of our ability, and clients will continue to receive the same types of services they receive today.
Phase 2
The next phase following the transition will look at how well our care teams are integrated and how to be more responsive to the needs of our clients.

Q: Who can I contact for more information?
A:
• VCH and Fraser Health have set up websites, email and phone lines to address any concerns that may arise:

Vancouver Coastal Health
Website: www.vch.ca/homesupport
Email: VCHhomesupport@vch.ca
Phone line: 1-877-708-5224 (toll free)

Fraser Health
Website: fraserhealth.ca/homesupport
Email: FHHSL@fraserhealth.ca
Phone line: 1-855-412-2121