

BCGEU: The union of choice for lab workers across B.C.



*M*edical laboratory services and the BCGEU have had a long history together. The B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU) represents close to a thousand medical laboratory workers across the province, including:

- ✓ **JR Silliker**
- ✓ **LifeLabs**
- ✓ **IDEXX**

If Cantest workers joined BCGEU, they would be varied into the Maxxam Analytics, Inc. collective agreement. BCGEU represents all Maxxam workers, and the current collective agreement is effective until March 2012.

By joining a union, we'll work together to build on workplace cooperation to solve problems and help make your workplace better.

**For more information call:
Will Beale: 604-916-9362**



Your Rights

The law in Canada says:

- You have the right to join a union
- Your employer may not prevent you from joining a union

Your employer will never know who has signed a yellow BCGEU membership card. They are not supposed to ask you, and you do not have to tell them if you signed a union membership card. It is **illegal** for your employer to fire you or take any action against you because you want to join a union.

You have a legal right to sign a BCGEU membership card and signing a card is confidential.

Feel free to call the BCGEU Organizing Department to make arrangements for one of our Organizers to personally pick up your card.

My Life, My Union

Workers join the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU) for different reasons. But some things everyone is interested in: workplace health and safety, wage equity, health and welfare benefits, and job security. When you join the BCGEU, you are no longer alone when it comes to dealing with issues at your workplace.

For Wayne Chee, the most important advantage of union membership is the focus on fairness and respect for

the workers. "Being a member of the union has allowed me to have

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-Wayne Chee, LifeLabs

a voice in my workplace," says Wayne. He adds that having a solid support network is an invaluable aspect of being a union member. According to Wayne, it's about the reassurance of knowing that "if you run into problems at work, there is someone to support you."

Both he and his wife Rose are employed by LifeLabs, a medical laboratory services organization. Wayne works as a transportation specialist, and Rose is a medical lab assistant. Medical laboratory services and the BCGEU have had a long history together. There are currently almost 1,000 laboratory workers represented by the BCGEU, and LifeLabs (formerly MDS Metro) was originally certified by the BCGEU just over a decade ago.

Wayne and Rose have worked at LifeLabs for 23 and 15 years respectively and have been shop stewards (workplace leaders who help solve problems) for four years. They appreciate the significance of this role, as they are able to speak with their employers as equals at the bargaining table. They are also able to speak on behalf of their coworkers to address issues that are critical in their workplace.

One of these issues is health and safety. Health and safety concerns are vital in any workplace, especially in a medical laboratory. "We are currently addressing the dangers of working alone," says Wayne. "We've also been educating our members about the importance of occupational health and safety, and to make sure that procedures are in place to ensure employee safety."

The BCGEU is well known for offering quality educational opportunities for its members, providing access to a comprehensive education program to help them develop skills and expertise to represent members in their workplace.

Wayne and Rose have both taken the shop steward courses and have found these courses to be very useful for their roles. "BCGEU training has given us a better understanding of the labour movement in general, and the nuts and bolts of why we [as union members] came to be," says Wayne. Not only has Wayne been able to learn his rights as a worker, but he has had the rewarding experience of educating his coworkers about their rights as well.

