

June 4, 2024

To:
Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission
280 Slater Street, P.O. Box 1046, Station B
Ottawa, ON K1P 5S9

RE: Labour Dispute at Best Theratronics

As Canada's nuclear regulatory agency, we are writing to inform you of the potential for mishandling of radioactive material at the Best Theratronics medical devices facility in Ottawa, Ontario.

More than 50 members of Unifor Local 1541 and PSAC Local 70369 are on strike at Best Theratronics. Unifor members went on strike May 1, 2024. PSAC members went on strike May 10, 2024. Unifor members work in the skilled trades as certified machinists, welders, sheet metal workers, machining process specialists, calibrators, electronic technicians, electrical and mechanical inspectors at the facility while PSAC members work in planning, dosimetry and labs.

The owner of Best Theratronics recently issued a communication saying the company will use contractors to complete work.

Unifor and PSAC are concerned the company may use replacement workers at the facility during the strike who are both:

1. Too few to operate the facility safely.
2. Untrained and/or uncertified to do the work safely.

The CNSC conducted a Type II General Inspection audit of the facility in 2023 which included seven low safety significance of non-compliance. At the time, management reported that there were "no changes to the facility that had an impact on facility safety analysis reports."

However, the situation at the facility is significantly different today because of the work stoppage.

For example, on May 22, 2024, a truck was observed delivering live material to the facility at approximately 8:30 p.m. There was one car in the parking lot at the time, raising questions about how the receiving and offloading of live material is being done.

Unifor recommends a new inspection be scheduled to ensure Best Theratronics is fulfilling its obligations under the CNSC.

The facility at 413 March Road in Kanata, Ontario is operating under a Class 1B license for the use of Cobalt 60, Cesium 137, and cyclotrons.

In addition, for conducting work on equipment sold in Canada, the facility is licensed under:

1. Class II Nuclear Facilities
2. Prescribed Equipment License
3. Nuclear Substances and Radiation Devices

Management systems include proper training and certification for work including ensuring proper safety compliance and documentation of activities. Refresher training programs are every one to two years and are essential for all workers operating in the facility. The previous training was conducted in 2023.

Sincerely,

Steve Labelle

President, Unifor Local 1541



Jeff Gulis

President, PSAC Local 70369



Public Service Alliance of Canada
Alliance de la Fonction publique du Canada