



Community living workers take job action Wednesday

Nearly 3,400 community living workers who support adults, children and infants with disabilities and their families are going on strike, starting Wednesday January 30.

HEU members will be joining BCGEU and CUPE members picketing at 3851 Shell Road.

The 24-hour job action will also affect Richmond-based Developmental Disabilities Association (DDA) and Burnaby-based PosAbilities, the two largest community social service agencies in British Columbia. Agencies in Vancouver, Victoria, Prince George, Chilliwack, Coquitlam, Kamloops, Vanderhoof, Trail, Salmon Arm, Castlegar, Creston and Cranbrook will also be picketed.

A complete list of affected sites can be viewed here: (<http://www.cssfairdeal.ca/news/more-3000-community-living-workers-going-stri>).

Striking workers will converge at DDA's headquarters at 3851 Shell Road, Richmond starting at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday.

Striking workers want to send a clear message to the B.C. government: stop putting the squeeze on community living and other community-based social services! Proper funding is needed for programs for people with developmental disabilities and the workers who support them.

Recruitment and retention has become a huge problem in the community living sector. Some employers are opting not to pay the first pay level in the wage grid to better retain staff.

Frontline Community Living BC (CLBC) staff agree that additional funding is urgently needed to address the chronic program and support shortages in community living. More than half of all respondents to a recent survey expressed concerns about the budget-driven funding decisions they had been forced to make, over the previous year, with respect to their clients. More than 40% had been required to cut services or supports that they considered necessary for their clients' health, safety or well-being. The survey was conducted by the BCGEU, which also represents CLBC workers.

Essential service levels will be maintained.

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- Page Two -



Further 24-hour job action is scheduled for Thursday, January 31 in Victoria, Kamloops, Vanderhoof, Trail, Castlegar, Salmon Arm, and Creston, and on Friday, February 1 in Cranbrook.

Community living workers are represented by HEU, BCGEU, CUPE, HSA and six other unions, which together make up the Community Social Services Bargaining Association. There are 15,000 unionized community social service workers, and two-thirds of them work in community living.

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