



Newsletter

Islanders demand end to health cuts and privatization

*Victoria stages public protests;
VIHA Board meeting disrupted in Nanaimo*

IT MAY HAVE BEEN April Fools Day, but health care workers from Victoria General and Royal Jubilee hospitals decided it was time to give the public the straight goods about the alarming state of public health care and why health care workers have given their bargaining committee a strike mandate.

Actions kicked off at 6 am when VGH workers draped two banners – “People Before Profit” and “Fighting for Health Care” – over a nearby bridge, just in time for rush hour traffic. As the morning progressed, health care workers at Royal Jubilee and VGH distributed hundreds of leaflets to hospital visitors and passersby. The actions were met with a strong show of encouragement as members of the public stopped to talk and drivers honked in support.

A few hours later, health care workers at Royal Jubilee joined with seniors and other community groups at the University of Victoria where they marched across the campus, later heading to an afternoon rally sponsored by the Communities’ Solidarity Coalition.

The 700-strong rally, which focused on health care, housing and poverty issues, called on the Campbell government to stop its attack on workers, students, seniors, women, and other citizens marginalized by the Liberals’ cutbacks agenda.

Yesterday in Nanaimo, more than 100 health care workers and community members packed a public session of the Vancouver Island Health Authority board meeting to demand greater accountability and more democratic decision-making.

Angered by VIHA executive pay raises and board salaries, those in attendance expressed their frustration over the dismantling of Island health services while administrative spending continues to increase.

In a detailed presentation about VIHA’s reckless approach to privatization, HEU Nanaimo Chairperson Shawn Tracy told the board that workers, patients and quality health care were suffering from the decision to contract out hospital services.

June Ross of the Nanaimo Solidarity Coalition called on the board to open up its decision-making process to the public.

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