



Newsletter

New health minister meets with HEU

IN A RECENT MEETING with BC's newly-appointed Minister of Health Services, Shirley Bond, HEU's Administrative Committee described the harmful effects Bill 37 and other health care policies are having on workers, patients and communities.

Cuts to seniors' care, the looming recruitment and retention crisis resulting from across-the-board wage cuts, and growing concerns about the damaging effects of contracting-out topped the February 11 agenda.

"We urged the Minister to take a very serious look at the havoc that's being created in our hospitals and care homes, and we described in very clear terms how Bill 37 is impacting the lives of our members and their families," said HEU's acting secretary-business manager Zorica Bosancic.

Bosancic said they discussed the recruitment and retention problems that are emerging in the wake of Bill 37 and counseled the Minister to take action before the health care system loses any more skilled, experienced professionals.

Unfortunately, Bond would not make a commitment to address those issues before the next round of bargaining.

HEU representatives also raised concerns about government's failure to deliver on its promise to create 5000 new long-term care beds.

And on issues related to privatization, HEU described how contracting out is affecting quality of care and warned Bond that the financial savings promised by her predecessor, Colin Hansen, would not pan out in the long run.

"This was an important opportunity for the new minister to hear directly from HEU's leadership about where and why health care is off track," said Bosancic. "And we were able to discuss in very real terms how wage rollbacks and contracting out is hurting patients, workers and communities."

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