



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWSLETTER

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HEU recognizes valuable care team on Health Care Assistant Day

October 18 is Health Care Assistant Day, and the Hospital Employees' Union is marking the occasion with a continued call for higher staffing levels and safer working conditions for these frontline care staff.

HEU represents about 15,000 care aides, community health workers and other occupations that are also designated as health care assistants. They work in residential care facilities, hospitals and in community-based services, including home support and adult day cares.

The union's secretary-business manager Jennifer Whiteside applauds care aides and community health workers for their deep commitment to the personal care they provide residents, patients and clients, but says they still need more resources to do their jobs.

Earlier this year, the B.C. seniors' advocate reported that 90 per cent of residential care homes were not adequately funded to meet minimum staffing guidelines, and also identified declining access to residential care beds and home support hours for older British Columbians.

"We're excited to work with the province's newly elected NDP government, whose election platform included a commitment to addressing health care and, in particular, the seniors' care crisis," says Whiteside. "Our members continue to work in one of the most stressful and unsafe occupations, with regular exposure to violence and injuries. It's time for action on staffing."

WorkSafeBC stats indicate, year after year, that health care assistants have the highest number of accepted time-loss claims of any occupation in B.C., with the highest number of injuries occurring in residential care, followed by home care settings.

Last year, the union launched a successful TV ad campaign that was inspired by testimonials provided by HEU members and calls for higher staffing levels, resulting in pre-election commitments by all parties to improve staffing.

Health Care Assistant Day is proclaimed by the provincial government each year on October 18.

October 18, 2017