HEU marks Health Care Assistant Day by calling for an end to contracting out and contract-flipping

October 18 is Health Care Assistant Day, and the Hospital Employees' Union is honouring the vital work HEU care aides and community health workers do to deliver safe, quality care in hospitals, residential care facilities, and in the community.

This year, the union is continuing to push for increased staffing levels and is calling for an end to contracting out and contract flipping – practices that destabilize care, keep wages low and create precarious work.

Stability is key to safe, compassionate care. Yet, in British Columbia, whole staff teams are fired when a long-term care home operator contracts out its health care workers, or changes sub-contractors.

"Secure employment and decent working conditions are the bedrock of safe, quality care for our residents and clients," says Whiteside.

"That's why the union is focusing on the need to change B.C.'s laws, so care staff do not lose their jobs when a contract flips – and residents do not lose their trusted caregivers."

Last year the union was successful in its advocacy to improve funding for staffing. The provincial government committed to $548 million over three years to increase hours of direct care in residential care.

With 85 per cent of care homes failing to meet government staffing guidelines, higher staffing levels are critical to better care and to help tackle a workload-driven health and safety crisis that puts care aides and community health workers among B.C.'s most dangerous jobs.

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.

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

October 18, 2018