



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWSLETTER

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COVID-19: HEU continues to take steps to safeguard members and the public

Union education and events suspended until at least May 1

HEU continues to take steps to protect the health and safety of members and the public in the face of a global COVID-19 pandemic. The outbreak has now extended to a North Vancouver nursing home and an assisted living facility in West Vancouver, and infected several health care workers and residents.

The outbreak over the weekend at the Lynn Valley Care Centre is the first instance of COVID-19 being detected in a health care facility in B.C. Several health care workers are among those infected and one elderly resident at the facility has become B.C.'s first COVID-19-related fatality.

HEU does not represent workers at the care home currently. Because of contracting out and contract flipping in the past, the workers there are employed by at least three different companies. But some of the Lynn Valley workers also are employed at HEU-represented facilities elsewhere.

HEU secretary-business manager Jennifer Whiteside says the union is making sure that members impacted by public health orders to self isolate are supported financially by health employers.

"We've received assurances from the Health Employers Association of B.C. that our members employed under the provisions of the Facilities Collective Agreement are provided with general paid leave if they are required to self isolate as a result of potential exposure to COVID-19.

"And it is our expectation that long-term care operators and their sub-contractors as well as hospital support service contractors will also implement measures to provide economic security to our members who find themselves in a similar situation, or where they are directed to self-isolate or where they fall ill and have inadequate paid sick time."

HEU is taking other steps to combat the spread of the COVID-19 including suspending all in-person union education and union events until at least May 1. Joint meetings between the union and employers will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

"It is critical that we do our part in 'flattening the curve' by limiting opportunities for the spread of COVID-19, especially among health care workers," says Whiteside. "As the pressure intensifies on our health system, we have a special responsibility as B.C.'s largest health union to do our part to keep workers safe."

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For a number of weeks, the union has been in regular meetings with Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonny Henry, Ministry of Health and health authority representatives to ensure a smooth flow of information around COVID-19 preparedness.

“We are ensuring that every possible step is taken to support health care workers who are on the front lines of this crisis. That includes ensuring that proper training and equipment is available to members so that they can safely play their central role in the response to COVID-19.”

For up to date information from HEU on COVID-19, please see www.heu.org or follow us on Facebook.

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