



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWSLETTER

PLEASE POST

HEU recognizes International Day Against Homophobia – May 17

Since 2005, HEU's Pink Triangle Standing Committee has recognized the International Day Against Homophobia – May 17– as part of its member and community outreach.

This year's theme is *Fight the Homophobia Web Virus*. The internet and social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) have become dangerous vehicles for the spread of hatred, discrimination, racism, sexual exploitation and cyberhomophobia, drawing tremendous media attention and inspiring national anti-bullying campaigns.

A 2012 Dalhousie University study revealed that nearly 25 per cent of teen suicides were the result of homophobic bullying and harassment.

As a social justice union, HEU's been a pioneer in advocating for LGBT rights, same-sex spousal benefits, and employment equality – even negotiating anti-discrimination language in our collective agreements.

At HEU's 1994 convention, four equity caucuses were established, including the Lesbian and Gay Standing Committee (Pink Triangle Standing Committee) to recognize the diversity of our membership, advance and protect the rights of equity-seeking workers, and advocate to end discrimination based on gender, race, ethnic background, disability or sexual orientation.

And in 2008, delegates to the union's biennial convention passed a resolution making the Women's Committee a standing committee as well.

May 17 is a landmark date because the World Health Organization finally removed homosexuality as a mental illness from its list of diagnoses on that day 23 years ago.

Now, May 17 is an opportunity for us to draw attention to the disastrous effects of homophobia – especially teens being bullied in school – and to recognize our LGBT sisters and brothers in our workplaces.

HEU is once again sponsoring a table at the International Day Against Homophobia Breakfast – hosted by Qmunity and Vancity – today at Vancouver's Fairmont Hotel. This year's theme is *Homophobia in Sport*.

For more information, visit <<http://www.homophobiaday.org/>>.

May 17, 2013

