



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWS RELEASE

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Retirement Concepts set to slash care hours for seniors at Coquitlam nursing home

HEU calls on government to open the books on corporation's province-wide operations, and review all staffing decisions

The Hospital Employees' Union is calling on the provincial government to protect seniors and reverse a decision by Retirement Concepts to reduce care levels at the Dufferin Care Centre in Coquitlam, and put the company's province-wide operations under review.

HEU represents care staff at the 153-bed facility. The provincial government, through the Fraser Health Authority, funds 128 of these beds for seniors who require long-term care.

Retirement Concepts subcontracts care at Dufferin Care Centre but tightly controls staffing decisions. The subcontractor has been told by Retirement Concepts to reduce staffing by about 115 hours a week, effective March 10. Most of the cuts will be to care aide hours.

Care aides provide personal care to seniors, including assistance with toileting, bathing, dressing and meals.

HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy says that government needs to take steps to reverse the planned cuts and put Retirement Concepts' staffing decisions under close review.

"Given this company's track record, it's time for the provincial government to intervene on behalf of seniors and put Retirement Concepts' staffing decisions under a microscope – not just at Dufferin Care Centre – but at all other government-subsidized facilities it operates," says Darcy.

"And the province also needs to review the company's books to determine whether Retirement Concepts is squeezing excess profits from its government subsidy, at the expense of quality care for seniors."

HEU represents staff at a number of Retirement Concepts' facilities that receive public funding including Nanaimo Seniors' Village, Beacon Hill Villa, Summerland Retirement Centre and Dufferin Care Centre. The union also represents staff at The Waverly in Chilliwack – a facility that Retirement Concepts runs without public funding.

The 43,000-member HEU represents the majority of long-term care workers in B.C. including care aides, licensed practical nurses, activity aides, rehab assistants and support workers who provide housekeeping, laundry and food services.

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