



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Salary hikes for top bureaucrats outrageous – HEU

Huge pay increases for senior government bureaucrats are outrageous, disrespectful and out of touch, says the Hospital Employees' Union.

According to information quietly posted today on the B.C. government website, deputy ministers are being paid salaries ranging from \$299,215 to \$348,600, effective August 1, 2008. That's an increase of between 35 and 43 per cent.

"It's appalling that this government is handing out raises of up to \$100,000 a year, apparently to address a recruitment and retention problem, when B.C. is struggling to find enough health care workers to provide quality services to patients, residents and clients," says HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy.

"Dealing with staff shortages in health care is a higher priority for British Columbians than dealing with a perceived recruitment problem for deputy ministers."

Health care workers are still recovering from a government-imposed 15 per cent wage rollback in 2004, and the massive contracting out of thousands of hospital housekeepers and food services workers in 2003.

Darcy says that it would take a hospital housekeeper, now employed by private multinational contractors, more than a decade to earn what a deputy minister will be taking home in one year.

"One executive increase of \$77,000 a year would pay wages for three full-time housekeepers in a Lower Mainland or southern Vancouver Island hospital right now," says Darcy.

Labour shortages are evident throughout health care, from pharmacy, lab and x-ray assistants to licensed practical nurses and care aides. And in community social services, agencies are having difficulty retaining qualified workers.

"What we need is a comprehensive training and recruitment strategy to ensure that we are able to attract and retain the skilled people needed to deliver health services to British Columbians," says Darcy.

"What we got is a government that puts the interest of its highest paid executives ahead of B.C. patients and those who deliver front-line care."

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