



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

# NEWSLETTER

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## New VIHA care model fails to deliver substantial improvements in seniors' care

As the Vancouver Island Health Authority prepares to introduce its new care delivery model for all directly administered residential care facilities, the union is concerned that changes will not result in significant improvements to long-term care delivery.

The new model, to be implemented February 8, involves some increases in hours of direct care per resident, per day, and new schedules for some care staff.

Contrary to VIHA's public statements that the new model will improve "quality and consistency of care," staffing level increases, where they exist, are minimal.

And while the model provides for one day of employer-paid education for care staff, there are no substantial initiatives to address workload challenges that continue to be on the rise.

"Over the last several years, long-term care facilities have seen a significant increase in the acuity levels of their residents," says HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy. "But even though many residents are older and sicker when they enter a care facility, staffing levels have not risen to meet the challenging and complex needs of today's resident population.

"Our seniors have a right to quality care, and that means government and their health authorities must ensure there are appropriate numbers of staff available to meet residents' needs," she adds.

Darcy says the union is also concerned that the privatization of support services has resulted in lower staffing levels in housekeeping and food services which generates more work for the direct care staff.

HEU is committed to working with staff, residents and family members at the local facility level to document workload problems and to raise these concerns with managers, regional officials and government.

At the provincial level, the union is working with community partners on several activities aimed at improving seniors' care.

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