



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

# NEWSLETTER

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## HEU responds to article on hospital superbugs

*An edited version of this letter to the editor appeared April 10 in Vancouver's Province newspaper*

Sunday's coverage of hospital superbugs exposes a contradiction that should alarm anyone interested in fighting the spread of these infections.

In the article, Dr. Elizabeth Bryce, regional medical director for Vancouver Coastal Acute Infections Control, names "clean hospitals" as one of the key solutions to this growing problem.

Meanwhile, the president of Westech Systems – the company hired to audit cleaning standards after the privatization of support services in 2002 – has gone on record stating the opposite. In a February 23 interview with the *Burnaby Now* newspaper, Dean Waisman denied the connection between hospital-acquired infections and hospital cleanliness.

But ask any cleaner and they'll tell you how their work is on the frontlines of infection control and patient health. Unfortunately, the cleaners employed by multinational corporations in Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island hospitals are consistently denied the time, training and supplies to meet appropriate standards.

That's why HEU has launched a campaign that calls on the health authorities and government to step in and ensure safe working conditions and family supporting wages for the thousands of contracted-out workers who are a vital part of the health care team and a vital part of the solution to hospital superbugs.

A failure to do so raises perhaps the most important question of all – will the B.C. government let politics and ideology stand in the way of medical evidence, good public policy and quality patient care?

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secretary-business manager  
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