



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWSLETTER

PLEASE POST

HEU members lose jobs as government moves ahead with privatizing seniors' care

VIHA closes hundreds of public beds on Vancouver Island to make way for more private, for-profit operators

HEU members at seniors' facilities on Vancouver Island are reeling from today's announcement by the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) that more than 250 regular care staff will lose their jobs over the summer with the planned closure of hundreds of long-term care beds.

The surprise announcement impacts eight facilities in Duncan, Nanaimo, Parksville and Victoria.

"Our members were called into meetings today and told they would be losing their jobs within the next few months as the health authority closes 350 public beds in several island facilities," says HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy.

HEU members affected include care aides, LPNs, activity aides, rehab assistants, unit clerks, housekeeping, laundry, and food service workers.

"With the ongoing turmoil in seniors' care – caused by contract-flipping, short-staffing, and heavy workloads – this is absolutely the wrong thing to do," says Darcy. "It can only further demoralize workers, while continuing to destabilize care for seniors."

The union will be meeting with VIHA on Monday to press the health authority to retain jobs for skilled and experienced workers and ensure a smooth relocation plan for seniors.

The closure of 350 public, long-term care beds is part of government's privatization of seniors' care. The vast majority of new beds opening on the island will be owned and operated by private, for-profit companies.

In addition to the full closure of Cowichan Lodge in Duncan, beds will be closed at Cairnsmore Place (Duncan), Dufferin Place (Nanaimo), Trillium Lodge (Parksville), as well as at The Priory, Aberdeen-Lansdowne, Glengarry and Gorge Road in Victoria.

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