



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

# NEWSLETTER

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## B.C.'s child poverty rate remains highest in Canada

For the fifth year in a row, British Columbia has the highest rate of child poverty in the country.

A report released Friday by First Call: B.C.'s Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition shows there are now 181,000 children in B.C. living in poverty – about the same number as the combined populations of Nanaimo, Prince George and Cranbrook.

And more than half of the province's poor children are living in families where adults are working full-time.

HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy says many HEU members will see themselves and their co-workers in those statistics.

“The child poverty rate in this province is absolutely shameful,” says Darcy. “It’s exactly why the campaign to achieve a living wage is so important and why it’s gaining support in every area of the community.”

Darcy says many HEU members working for the three largest corporate contractors in health care – Sodexo, Aramark and Compass – are working two and three jobs just to make ends meet.

“And they’re not alone,” she says. “Low-waged jobs in health care and other sectors are on the rise and they’re pushing more and more families into poverty. They’re the reason why we say work should lift you out of poverty, not keep you there.”

According to First Call’s report the proportion of children living in poverty in B.C. was 21.9 per cent, compared to the national rate of 15.8 per cent.

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