



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

# NEWSLETTER

PLEASE POST

## New study confirms low wages are causing serious recruitment problems in community social services

A new study by the Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia (SPARC BC) cites low wages and a lack of respect for work performed in community-based social services as key reasons for growing retention and recruitment problems throughout the sector.

According to Rebecca Siggner who prepared the report, “every employer we spoke to is having trouble hiring and keeping staff, especially casual workers.”

The study – *Exploring Recruitment and Retention Issues for Community Social Service Sector Employers* – is based on survey results gathered from several of the province’s unionized community social services workplaces, including community living, child care centres and agencies providing child, family and counseling services.

Siggner says employers reported they are struggling to find qualified applicants for vacancies and that recruitment of casuals and relief workers is particularly problematic. More than half of the respondents said these positions stayed vacant for more than three months.

And while average annual turnover in the past year was 10 per cent, for casuals it was 47 per cent..

Similar results were also found in a comprehensive survey of community living employers undertaken by the Community Social Services Employers’ Association.

The SPARC study, which was conducted on behalf of unions in the Community Social Services Bargaining Association, also showed that recruitment and retention problems were responsible for increased stress and burnout among workers in the sector.

Recommendations included in the report call for increased funding for wages, comparability with work done in other sectors, and a program of training incentives to increase the number of qualified workers.

You can find a link to the SPARC report on the electronic version of this newsletter at <[www.heu.org](http://www.heu.org)>.

March 28, 2008

