



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWS RELEASE

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APRIL 7, 2009

HEU's new TV ad takes aim at the state of seniors' care in B.C.

The Hospital Employees' Union launched a new TV ad today to draw attention to the crisis facing seniors' care in British Columbia.

The ad recounts the barriers facing families as they struggle to obtain quality long-term care for a loved one, including bed shortages, low staffing, and extra costs and fees.

HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy says the government's broken 2001 election promise to provide 5,000 new non-profit long-term care beds has put immense strain on seniors' health services and on acute care hospitals.

"The truth is, the B.C. Liberal government has closed more long-term care beds than it has opened," says Darcy.

"And the ripple effect of their failure to deliver promised long-term care beds is being felt by families and communities across the province."

There are a growing number of groups who are recognizing the severity of the crisis facing seniors' care.

- The B.C. Medical Association concluded last May that: "The current system is fragmented and uncoordinated, which translates to costly and inefficient care," and that "when compared to the rest of the country, B.C. comes in last in terms of residential care funding and provides the fewest number of residential care beds per capita."
- The B.C. Care Providers Association said last November: "By refusing to pay the real costs of delivering increasingly complex care services to our seniors in need, government and health authorities are forcing long-term care providers to lower their quality of care by reducing services and staffing to unacceptable levels."
- B.C.'s Auditor General reported last October that: "The Ministry of Health Services is not adequately fulfilling its stewardship role in helping to ensure that the home and community care system has the capacity to meet the needs of the population."

HEU's new ad can be viewed at www.standupforseniorscare.ca along with a series of fact sheets on seniors' care issues, and references for the studies cited above.

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