



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWSLETTER

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Rally galvanizes support for striking care staff, better seniors' care at Qualicum Gardens

HEU members urged to send a message to corporate heads of private facility

Despite the short notice and a blustery, windy day, close to 60 union members, families, and community supporters gathered together on May 4 to throw their support behind striking care staff at Qualicum Gardens.

HEU president Ken Robinson told the crowd he was proud to stand with workers, who are demanding better working and caring conditions at the privately owned facility that's home to 85 seniors.

"What I witnessed first-hand today was the absolute inefficiency of privatization," says Robinson. "There are three private companies taking profits out of Qualicum Gardens – Chartwell manages the facility, Pro Vita provides care services, and WestCana provides support services. It's a system that is fractured in the extreme, and it has shown itself to be incapable of delivering safe, quality care to its residents."

Prior to the rally in front of Qualicum Gardens, the crowd marched through the town to the office of incumbent Liberal candidate Ron Cantelon, whom Robinson says has not been willing to stand up for health care workers.

"He didn't have a problem giving himself a pay raise," says Robinson, "but where is his support for the hard-working, dedicated care staff at this seniors' home who are being paid the lowest wages on the Island?"

HEU member Christine Brennan, an alternate on the union bargaining committee and secretary-treasurer of her local, says the substandard wages have caused a huge recruitment and retention problem at the facility.

"Our turnover is brutal," says Brennan. "We're always working short-staffed. It's impossible to provide the level and quality of care our residents deserve under these conditions."

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Leanne Salter, the NDP candidate for the new constituency of Parksville-Qualicum, and Nanaimo incumbent MLA Leonard Krog were both on hand to offer their solidarity and support to the striking workers.

HEU members from Trillium, Eagle Park, Arrowsmith and Malaspina also joined the solidarity rally to support their union sisters and brothers, who will lose their jobs as of June 24 as a result of Pro Vita cancelling its contract with Chartwell.

Robinson is urging all HEU members to send a message calling for fair wages and better caring conditions to:

Chartwell Seniors Housing REIT

Stephen Suske, CEO, Spectrum Seniors Housing Development

toll-free: 1-888-584-2386

fax: 905-501-0813

email: info@chartwellreit.ca

Qualicum Gardens

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