



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWSLETTER

PLEASE POST

Ladysmith care staff raising alarm over contracting out

They're joining workers and citizens at Duncan rally for seniors' care April 24

HEU members at Lodge on 4th in Ladysmith – who are losing their jobs to contracting out – aren't going quietly. They're letting the public know just how serious this mass layoff is when it comes to providing quality and continuity of care for Lodge residents.

“We're holding an information line every Tuesday until our last day of work on June 6,” says HEU member Sheila Niehaus, who is one of more than 150 pink-slipped staff at Lodge on 4th.

“The response we're getting from families, other union members and passers-by is awesome,” says Niehaus, who will be speaking at a Rally for Seniors' Care in Duncan on April 24th.

The rally – set for 4:00 p.m. on Saturday – has been organized to protest the continued deterioration of seniors' care in the region, which has seen the closure of Cowichan Lodge in Duncan; a failed attempt to contract out care at the Lodge's replacement facility Sunridge Place; and most recently, the contracting out of care and support at Lodge on 4th and Duncan's Cerwydden Care.

Earlier in the week, Duncan City Council voted unanimously to voice its opposition to contracting out seniors' care. On April 19, the Council agreed to write B.C.'s Premier and Minister of Health Services, urging the provincial government to work with all stakeholders to deal with the deterioration of seniors' care throughout the Cowichan Valley.

HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy says there's a huge and unnecessary cost to contracting out residential care and support services.

“You cannot separate working conditions from caring conditions,” says Darcy. “By severing residents' relationships with the staff who care for them, you create tremendous anxiety and distress for residents and their family members.”

She says it's time for government and their health authorities to change direction and make safe, quality care for the province's seniors a top priority.

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