



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Stanford Place staff return strong strike vote

*HEU calls on for-profit long-term care operator to negotiate fair collective agreement*

Hospital Employees' Union members providing front-line care and support services at Stanford Place have given their bargaining committee an 84 per cent strike mandate. Union members want the facility's owners to withdraw their demand for a second round of wage rollbacks.

The 230-bed residential care facility located in Parksville is owned by the Ahmon Group and employs about 225 staff including dietary and housekeeping workers, care aides, licensed practical nurses and registered nurses.

The workers are currently bargaining their first collective agreement.

At issue is the for-profit employer's demand for a 20 per cent roll back in staff wages and benefits – a move that would make them one of the lowest paying long-term care employers on the central Island.

This is on top of a five per cent roll back that was imposed on Stanford Place staff in January 2010 before HEU was certified as the employees' official bargaining agent.

At the time, staff were assured that once the facility was in the black, their wages and benefits would be restored to original levels.

“When the facility opened in 2008, our members were recruited with a decent, family-supporting wage and benefit package that was used to attract experienced workers,” says HEU negotiator David Durning.

“But within little more than two years, the Ahmon Group has reneged on that agreement not once, but twice, with no regard for the impact on their workers or the seniors in their care.”

The union says workers are not able to absorb a further 20 per cent roll back. And many experienced staff, who had left jobs to work at the facility and commute from other Island communities, say they will be forced to leave Stanford Place.

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“This employer is creating an untenable situation where some staff will be forced to leave their jobs and others will be left to cope with a high stress, low-morale working environment, all of which impacts the continuity and quality of care,” says Durning.

Negotiations began last summer and the last meeting was in early December. Durning says the union is urging the Ahmon Group to return to the bargaining table with a revised proposal.

In the meantime, the union will enter discussions with the Ahmon Group to establish essential services levels to protect resident health and safety in the event of job action.

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