



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWSLETTER

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Living Wage Campaign gaining community support

The Living Wage Campaign – launched by HEU in 2007 – is reaching more communities across the province with a number of new initiatives underway.

Last month, First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition held its first Citizens Series on Health “webinar” – *A Living Wage: One Path to Addressing Income and Poverty as Determinants of Health* – with a focus on northern communities.

Stemming from that interactive, online webinar, the University of Northern B.C. social work department and Northern Health’s population health department are partnering to explore ways to promote better health and reduce poverty in northern municipalities by “looking at supporting Living Wage calculations in a number of towns.”

According to research by First Call and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the living wage calculation in Metro Vancouver is \$18.17 an hour, and \$17.31 an hour in Victoria.

On Vancouver Island, the Esquimalt City Council is contemplating a living wage bylaw, while Cowichan is about to release its living wage calculations, and Qualicum’s School District 69 recently passed a motion to support the Living Wage for Families Campaign. Plans to calculate a living wage are also being considered in Qualicum and by the Oceanside Coalition for Strong Communities.

In the Interior, Cranbrook just released its living wage calculation at \$14.16 an hour, while Williams Lake is undertaking research to launch a living wage campaign. Living wage calculations are also being looked at in Nelson and Kelowna.

Living wage calculations reflect the basic cost of living for a family of four with two young children, with both parents working full-time. The hourly rate assumes no benefits (such as MSP premiums or non-MSP health insurance plans) are paid by the employer.

At HEU’s recent convention, delegates supported the continuation of a Living Wage Campaign by involving more members from private and public-sector workplaces, and working with allies in the community and labour to advocate for living wages.

For more information, visit A Living Wage for Families website at <http://livingwageforfamilies.ca/>.

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