



# Newsletter

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## **Darcy letter published in Vancouver Sun**

The following letter was published in  
the Vancouver Sun on February 4:

**"Health care workers want to stop the hemorrhaging"**

Re: Public sector pay comparisons provide problems for both sides, Vaughn Palmer, Feb. 2

Quality care in B.C. hospitals and nursing homes depends in large part on the contributions of 38,000 health workers in 270 different job categories, a reality not reflected in Vaughn Palmer's take on public sector bargaining.

In 2004, the provincial government cut these workers' wages by 15 per cent.

They included medical transcriptionists, licensed practical nurses, unit coordinators, buyers, medical records clerks, dietary aides, information technology specialists, lab workers, operating room booking clerks, pharmacy techs, care aides, trades workers, and highly specialized diagnostic technicians.

They also included hospital cleaners, a group critical to patient safety in this era of superbugs.

But privatization has reduced cleaners to just four per cent of this workforce, which may surprise readers given their central place in Palmer's commentary.

We need a clear picture of the entire health care team if we are to solve a recruitment and retention crisis that has been fuelled by wage cuts, short-staffing and crushing workloads.

In addition to recovering lost ground, health unions are proposing targeted increases to wage rates that are out-of-sync with market realities and increased responsibilities.

The real question is this: Will health employers and government negotiate solutions to these problems?

Judy Darcy  
Secretary-Business Manager  
Hospital Employees' Union"

February 9, 2006

