



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWSLETTER

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Petition to protect seniors' care and workers' rights presented to MLA at weekend rally

B.C. Fed president applauds HEU Nanaimo Seniors Village members' fightback

More than 70 supporters gathered at Nanaimo's Matteo Sutton Park on Sunday to support the laid-off care staff at Nanaimo Seniors Village (NSV) and to call on the government to intervene and protect seniors' care and workers' rights at the private, for-profit facility.

The NSV workers presented a petition signed by more than 2,400 Nanaimo and area citizens to local MLA Leonard Krog. The petition calls on the provincial government to "take the necessary measures to protect seniors' care and workers' rights by ensuring that termination notices issued to CareSource employees at Nanaimo Seniors Village are immediately suspended."

B.C. Federation of Labour president Jim Sinclair was one of several speakers who thanked the NSV workers for taking on the fight for quality seniors' care and for decent wages and workplace rights.

Sinclair also said that *Bill 29* – key sections of which were struck down by the Supreme Court of Canada in June – is at the root of the contract-flipping and workforce instability at Nanaimo Seniors Village, and congratulated HEU for successfully challenging the legislation.

HEU regional vice-president Sandra Giesbrecht told the crowd that "the impact on the lives of the workers is merely the tip of the iceberg" because the residents at the Village are negatively affected by the repeated layoffs of their caregivers.

"Compromising quality care is not an option," Giesbrecht said.

NSV local chairperson Chris Martin described the bond that develops between residents and care staff.

"We continue to put our residents first in any situation.

"This facility [Nanaimo Seniors Village] is more than a building. It's a home. It's home to 150 people and it's home to staff as well," said Martin.

In May, more than 160 health care workers employed by CareSource at Nanaimo Seniors Village received termination notices, effective September 5. This is the third time in less than four years that this care team has lost their jobs to contracting out.

August 21, 2007

