



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

# NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## HEU calls for urgent action on staffing crisis in seniors' care

In the wake of a Seniors Advocate report showing over 90 per cent of the province's senior care facilities are understaffed, HEU is calling for urgent action to stem the growing crisis.

That's up from 82 per cent in last year's report.

"This new statistic is shocking by anyone's standards," says HEU secretary-business manager Jennifer Whiteside. "But it absolutely confirms what our members are telling us – the staffing crisis is only getting worse."

Whiteside says government needs to take the opportunity in February's provincial budget to inject the funding required to bring all care homes up to the province's minimum staffing guideline.

But she also says new funds must be accompanied by strong accountability measures to ensure additional resources go to front-line staffing and are not diverted to profits and administration.

"Going forward, we also need to determine the actual level of staffing hours required to deliver safe, quality care, and adopt legislation to enforce that standard," says Whiteside.

And finally, she says, "We cannot solve the staffing crisis in residential care if we don't deal with the ongoing problem of contracting out and contract flipping, which is disrupting care across the province."

"Right now, private operators can contract out and flip contracts at will, laying off entire staff teams in the process. It's a practice that destabilizes the continuity and quality of care seniors receive."

HEU represents 46,000 health care workers across B.C., including about 20,000 working directly with seniors in residential care and other care settings.

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