



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWS RELEASE

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APRIL 23, 2013

NDP's health care plans good news for B.C.'s seniors

[Burnaby, B.C.] The 43,000-member Hospital Employees' Union says that the NDP's commitment to bolstering standards of care for B.C.'s seniors is a move in the right direction.

HEU's secretary-business manager Bonnie Pearson says strategic investments in both residential care and home support services will also help take pressure off overcrowded hospitals.

"It's so important to focus health care resources so that seniors receive quality care in a setting that's appropriate to their needs," says Pearson.

"And by increasing standards of care in residential facilities, and reversing cuts to home support in the community, we can reduce the number of seniors who end up in emergency rooms and hospital beds."

HEU represents about 20,000 members who work in residential care and home support including care aides, community health workers, rehab assistants, activity aides, nurses and support workers.

"Improving standards of care in nursing homes means our members will have more time to provide for personal care needs such as bathing, toileting, feeding and other important activities that contribute to overall quality of life for residents.

"The lack of time to provide this care is a constant source of stress for our members, so today's announcement is an important down payment on our responsibility to frail and vulnerable seniors and others who require 24-hour care."

Pearson says the NDP's commitment to improve mental health and addiction services will similarly reduce costs and pressures on the health care system over time.

The NDP's commitment to establish an independent seniors' advocate is critical and supported by health care and seniors' advocates as well as health unions.

The BC Liberals had brought in legislation in the last session to establish a seniors' advocate, but failed to provide the office with independence from the cabinet and the health ministry.

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