



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWS RELEASE

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Care home survey reinforces need for improved staffing levels

Vancouver – B.C.'s Seniors Advocate is once again calling for higher staffing levels in residential care facilities after releasing the results of a ground-breaking survey of care home residents and their families.

The 49,000-member Hospital Employees' Union, which represents about 20,000 residential care staff in B.C., says today's findings and recommendations add to a growing consensus that urgent action is needed to improve staffing levels in B.C.'s residential care homes.

"This was a mammoth undertaking by the Seniors Advocate, but an important one that gave voice to the residents of care homes and their families," says HEU secretary-business manager Jennifer Whiteside.

"Clearly, residents are looking for more timely assistance with basic care needs, more flexibility with meal times and when they get up in the morning, as well as higher levels of social interaction and activities. That's why today's report recommends more staff.

"But the results also speak to the strong care relationship that exists between residents and their caregivers – one that is based on respect. That's about the commitment of our members to providing the best care possible under the circumstances."

Whiteside says government needs to move quickly to meet the commitments made last March by the previous government to ensure that the minimum staffing guidelines are met.

"Funds for new staff must be linked to strong accountability measures to ensure additional resources go to front-line staffing – not diverted to profits and administration.

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

"And we must deal with the ongoing problem of repeated contracting out of care staff, which is disrupting care relationships across the province."

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