



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWS RELEASE

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Budget 2018 continues positive shift in B.C.'s priorities for health care and affordability, says HEU

[VICTORIA] The B.C. 2018 budget continues last September's positive shift in B.C.'s priorities for health care, as part of the province's commitment to affordability, improved services and a strong economy that works for everyone, says the 49,000-member Hospital Employees' Union.

"After a generation of neglect, the BC NDP's 2018 budget allocates \$1.5 billion in new spending over the next three years, putting our health system back on track," says HEU secretary-business manager Jennifer Whiteside. "By strengthening health care, Premier Horgan's government is affirming that you can't build a better future for British Columbians without providing quality acute, residential and community care."

"Significantly, the \$548 million set aside in the budget to increase hours of direct care in residential care, restores hope for seniors and those who deliver the care," says Whiteside. "The budget also promises \$950 million in additional funding to maintain health services and improve primary care – that means more frontline workers to provide quality care for a growing and aging population."

Budget 2018 also reaffirms the government's commitment to new and long overdue construction of hospitals. As the province gears up to build new health infrastructure, HEU is looking forward to a long-needed review of public-private-partnerships (P3s), as there is growing evidence from within B.C., across Canada and around the world that P3s are the most expensive way to finance new hospital construction.

In addition to health care improvements, the government also announced two major initiatives on housing and childcare that will make life more affordable, and strengthen the economy, for British Columbians.

"Budgets are about choices and this budget chooses to put people first," says Whiteside. "The choices this government is making to improve access to affordable, safe and secure housing and child care – like their commitment to renew our health system – marks a historic change that will benefit all British Columbians."

HEU is B.C.'s largest health union with members working in hundreds of occupations in hospitals, care homes, home care agencies, First Nations health centres and other settings.

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