



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWS RELEASE

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HEU urges VIHA to put Nanaimo Seniors Village under administration

[BURNABY, B.C.] – The Hospital Employees' Union is demanding the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) put another Retirement Concepts care home under administration. The union also says that the provincial government should implement an action plan to monitor all of the company's care homes in the province.

The health authority announced yesterday that it had appointed an administrator to oversee operations at Retirement Concepts' Comox Valley Seniors Village citing concerns over significant staffing shortages that are undermining care delivery.

"The situation at Comox Valley Seniors Village is not unique," says HEU secretary-business manager Jennifer Whiteside. "We've been raising similar concerns directly with the health authority about the staffing crisis at Nanaimo Seniors Village since the summer."

She says the union had written the health authority a month ago urging them to put the care home under administration, but so far VIHA has not acted on this request.

Whiteside says the company's inability to properly staff their Nanaimo location undermines the quality of care for seniors and creates unsafe working conditions for members.

"This is a serious crisis of care for Island seniors that warrants immediate action."

HEU is also urging the provincial government to implement an action plan it had proposed 18 months ago after the care home chain's new owner — the insurance company Anbang — ran into financial troubles and was put under direct control of a Chinese government regulator.

"Care for B.C. seniors should not be undermined by the financial troubles of an insurance company on the other side of the world," says Whiteside.

"We need an action plan in place to monitor spending and staffing, and to investigate the possibility of acquiring and operating Anbang's nursing homes directly, should they be put on the market."

HEU is B.C.'s largest health union with more than 50,000 members working in hospitals, care homes, home care agencies, First Nations health centres and other settings. The union represents about 2,000 Retirement Concepts staff across B.C.

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