



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWS RELEASE

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HEU demands audit of Pine Grove Care Centre

The Hospital Employees' Union is demanding that the Interior Health Authority audit the finances of the Pine Grove Care Centre in Kamloops to determine how their public funding is being split between front-line care and company profits.

The union is concerned over claims by the facility's owner, Park Place Seniors Living, that it can't meet the standards of care it's obligated to provide without extracting further wage rollbacks from staff.

Park Place says it is experiencing a funding shortfall because of a new IHA funding model and increased accountability for staffing levels – and it is terminating its staffing contract with SimpeQ Care Inc. in order to find a lower cost sub-contractor.

Although Park Place said it might reconsider its retendering plans if SimpeQ produces a ten per cent reduction in labour costs, Pine Grove staff have rejected further rollbacks at a meeting they held Friday to discuss the issue.

It's expected that SimpeQ will now issue layoff notices to 75 nurses, care aides, activity aides, rehab assistants, and support staff that care for seniors at the facility.

The union's secretary-business Judy Darcy points out that Park Place contracted out care and support staff in 2006 resulting in significant wage and benefit reductions. And the provincial government has been increasing the monthly fees paid by long-term care residents for the past two years.

The facility also received additional funding from the health authority this year.

“Pine Grove residents are paying more. Care and support staff are paid less. Yet Park Place and SimpeQ are pleading poverty and demanding more from workers,” says Darcy.

“If there is a fundamental problem with the funding mechanism, Pine Grove residents and their families and our members deserve to know about it.

“But we believe that the health authority must also open up Pine Grove's books to determine how much public funding is going to front-line care and how much is being diverted into private profits for both Park Place Seniors Living and SimpeQ.”

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