



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWS RELEASE

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HEU questions reported staffing levels at Pine Grove Care Centre

The Hospital Employees' Union is raising questions about discrepancies in the number of care hours that Park Place Seniors Living claims it provides to residents at Pine Grove Care Centre in Kamloops.

Last weekend, Pine Grove staff received layoff notices after rejecting further rollbacks in their wages. Park Place and their subcontractor, SimpeQ Care Inc., claimed the rollbacks were necessary in order to meet higher staffing levels required by the Interior Health Authority.

But those claims appear to be at odds with staffing level statistics reported by Park Place to the IHA.

According to documents obtained by HEU through a freedom of information request, Park Place reports that it had been providing an average of 2.88 direct care hours per resident day for the past three years.

However, in contract negotiations earlier this year HEU was told that Pine Grove was providing just 2.33 hours of direct care per resident day – and was demanding steep wage rollbacks to move to the 2.8 hours required by the health authority.

HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy says that it's time for the health authority to open up Pine Grove's books to determine how much public funding is going towards front-line care and how much is going into company profits.

"This is about a lot more than statistics and accounting," says Darcy. "It's about ensuring that public health care dollars are targeted at improving the level of care we provide to our seniors.

"That's why we're repeating our call for a comprehensive audit of Pine Grove's operations to determine why there is a substantial discrepancy in staffing levels reported to the health authority."

Pine Grove staff will work their last day on May 26. There are about 75 HEU members at the facility including nurses, care aides, activity aides, rehab assistants and support workers.

HEU has represented workers at Pine Grove since 1979. Park Place purchased the facility in 2004 and laid off the staff in 2006 in order to contract out the work to SimpeQ at lower wages. The new sub-contractors employees rejoined the HEU shortly after.

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