



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MARCH 14, 2011**

HEU urges de Jong to adopt comprehensive approach to health portfolio

The Hospital Employees' Union says B.C.'s new health minister should adopt a comprehensive approach to the challenges facing the province's health care system.

HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy congratulated Mike de Jong on his cabinet appointment and urged him to advocate strongly for solutions that strengthen public health care.

"Our public health care system provides security and equity for B.C. families and an important competitive advantage to B.C. businesses," says Darcy.

"And British Columbians will be looking to the minister for action to improve these services."

For example, Darcy says the minister could take some immediate steps to cut surgical wait times and ease emergency room congestion by expanding home and residential care to seniors and investing in multi-disciplinary community health centres.

Darcy is hoping that the new cabinet will move beyond the misleading statements about health care spending favoured by the administration of Gordon Campbell.

"B.C.'s spending has remained sustainable over the long term compared to the size of the economy. Government tax breaks to corporations, on the other hand, have hampered our ability to support the public services we all depend on."

Darcy says the HEU dealt with Minister de Jong when he previously held the labour portfolio – and found him to be accessible and well-informed on labour issues.

"Our union is looking forward to working with the new health minister on our shared priority of improving health care delivery to British Columbians," says Darcy.

HEU is the largest health care union in the province representing 43,000 workers in the public and private sectors. HEU members work in every area of health care and community social services including nursing and patient care, diagnostic services, support services, health records and transcription, trades and maintenance, stores and supply, group homes and finance.

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