



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## Sunridge Place lays off its care and support staff

Two hundred and sixty-four health care and support workers at Sunridge Place, members of the Hospital Employees' Union, have received layoff notices in the wake of the sale of the Duncan facility.

The layoff notices, received by staff on February 17, 2014, indicate that the workers' last day will be June 2, 2014 and that the new owner of the seniors' residential care and assisted living facility will be made known to the union later this week.

HEU secretary-business manager Bonnie Pearson says that the layoffs are completely unexpected and will create uncertainty and disruption for the residents and their families as well as the workers.

"Large-scale staff replacements are devastating not only to workers but to the seniors who live there as well," says Pearson. "The residents and their families trust and depend on the staff at Sunridge to provide assistance with virtually every aspect of daily living.

"Laying off workers at the same time as the facility's ownership will be changing hands doubles the upheaval and chaos and is certainly not in the best interest of the residents."

Substantial changes to operations, like the sale of a facility, and large-scale staff replacement are addressed in B.C. Ombudsperson Kim Carter's February 2012 report, *The Best of Care (Part 2)*, where she notes that such moves are difficult for seniors because continuity and quality of care are disrupted.

Pearson adds that Sunridge Place staff are dedicated to the seniors they look after and take their duties and responsibilities seriously. "Sunridge Place workers remain committed to the residents and their families and to delivering the best care possible," she says.

Pearson says the union will be meeting with members and with Sunridge Place this week.

The layoffs are the latest in a string of labour relations difficulties at the private, for-profit residential care facility since it opened in 2008, just days after the closure of the Cowichan Lodge.

"At the time, Duncan citizens, seniors' groups and HEU told Island Health that closing the community's cherished public facility was a mistake," says Pearson. "Now, with the sale of Sunridge Place and subsequent mass staff layoffs, it's time for Island Health to re-evaluate its privatization of seniors' care."