



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWS RELEASE

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HEU congratulates B.C.'s first seniors' advocate

The 43,000-member Hospital Employees' Union welcomes Health Minister Terry Lake's appointment of Isobel Mackenzie as B.C.'s seniors' advocate.

HEU secretary-business manager Bonnie Pearson says the new seniors' advocate is much needed and hopes that government will provide the office with the necessary independence to do her job.

"The Office of the Seniors Advocate promises to bring much needed attention and profile to seniors' care and to a range of issues that have been of concern for many British Columbians for some time," says Pearson.

Pearson says that the B.C. Ombudsperson's comprehensive report on seniors' care released more than two years ago contains 176 recommendations that would improve care and support to seniors if implemented as outlined.

But the majority of those recommendations have been ignored by the provincial government.

Among the critical issues requiring immediate review and intervention are inadequate staffing levels in home and community care for seniors, and the ongoing large-scale staff replacement of health care workers occurring in residential care facilities.

Currently, more than 380 staff are facing layoff at two Vancouver Island care homes – New Horizons Care Centre and Sunridge Place.

"As the union representing tens of thousands of health care workers engaged in direct care to seniors, we look forward to working with Ms Mackenzie on the important objective of improving care to B.C. seniors," Pearson says.

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