



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OCTOBER 16, 2014

Care aides struggle to support seniors – poll

- **More than half don't have time to meet residents' care needs**
- **83 per cent have been victims of violence or aggression**

[BURNABY] Nearly three-quarters (73.3 per cent) of B.C.'s care aides say they are forced to rush through basic care for the elderly and disabled, according to a Viewpoints Research survey commissioned by the Hospital Employees' Union.

The poll of HEU care aide members paints an alarming picture of the pressures faced by those who deliver the bulk of personal care to nursing home residents, home care clients and, increasingly, to hospital patients.

More than 70 per cent report that they do not have enough time to comfort, reassure or calm those they care for when they are confused, agitated or fearful.

Half of those surveyed (54.3 per cent) report that they do not have enough time to adequately meet the needs of their residents, patients or clients.

A third (32.2 per cent) say that the standard of care in their workplace has been getting worse over the past few years. Only 21.8 per cent say standards are rising.

HEU secretary-business manager Bonnie Pearson says care aides and community health workers struggle to deliver quality care, short-staffed, while dealing with residents with more complex care needs including varying stages of dementia.

"The sad reality suggested by the numbers is that many of our frail elderly do not receive the attention they require and that our members want to provide," says Pearson.

"The situation also takes a huge toll on care staff. When workers are rushed off their feet trying to meet residents' needs, they put their own health at risk."

In fact more than half of survey respondents (52.7 per cent) have been injured on-the-job, and 83.1 per cent report that they have been struck, scratched, spit on or subjected to other acts of violence or aggression from a resident, patient or client.

The solutions are clear. Most of those surveyed say the single most important change to improve working and caring conditions is more staff or less workload.

The random phone survey of 602 care aides includes a small number of community health workers that provide similar care in home settings. The survey took place September 16 to 25, and is accurate to within 3.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

HEU represents 15,000 care aides – about a third of the union's total membership of 46,000.

October 18 is Health Care Assistant Day, designated by the provincial government to recognize the contribution of care aides and community health workers to quality care.

-30-

Contact: Mike Old, communications director, 604-828-6771 (cell)
- Backgrounder Available at www.heu.org -