



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWS RELEASE

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Stop the sale of seniors' care in Nanaimo, says HEU

The Hospital Employees' Union says the Vancouver Island Health Authority should act now to block the sale of Wexford Creek care home and stop the layoff of staff.

Wexford Creek staff learned Friday that the Good Samaritan Society plans to sell the eight-year old facility to an undisclosed buyer, and in preparation for the sale will be contracting out all staff.

About 140 care aides, nurses, cleaners, recreation aides, dietary staff, maintenance workers and others will work their last day on September 30. It's the second time they've been laid off in two years.

HEU secretary-business manager Jennifer Whiteside says: "Our members are upset and anxious, not just about their jobs, but about the impact this will have on residents and their families.

"Unfortunately, this is the new normal, with contracting out, contract flipping and ownership changes undermining quality, stable care for seniors across Vancouver Island.

"We think enough is enough. The health authority should stop the sale, stop the layoffs and put this facility under direct administration."

Wexford Creek is one of seven publicly funded long-term care facilities that opened in 2008 as part of a major expansion of residential care on Vancouver Island. But in the last three years, five of those facilities, representing 85 per cent of the new residential care beds, have been sold to new owners.

And at three of those facilities – Campbell River's New Horizon Care Home, Duncan's Sunridge Place, and now Wexford Creek – staff lost their jobs as a result of contracting out.

"This health authority has been unable to ensure stability and continuity of care at many of the facilities that it funds," says Whiteside. "It's time for the health authority to call a time out before any more damage is done."

In April 2014, the GSS laid off staff at Wexford Creek and hired them back at lower wages citing a lack of funding from the Vancouver Island Health Authority. The workers did not belong to a union at the time, but later joined HEU.

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Contact: Neil Monckton, Communications Officer, 604-209-3814 (c) or 604-456-7137 (w)