



HEU to meet with B.C.'s Seniors Advocate in early September

HEU has secured a meeting with B.C.'s new Seniors Advocate Isobel Mackenzie to discuss a range of problems affecting staff and residents in the province's long-term care facilities.

The early September meeting is part of the union's ongoing campaign calling for badly needed improvements in residential care delivery.

Of primary concern is chronic understaffing in many residential care facilities, which members say puts themselves and their residents at risk.

"Many long-term care homes simply don't have enough staff, 24/7, to provide the standard of care any one of us would want for ourselves and our loved ones," says HEU secretary-business manager Bonnie Pearson.

An HEU project initiated last fall under the banner *Time to Care* brought to light a number of pressing issues facing care aides and other health care assistants working in long-term care facilities.

"By far, the top concern reported by participating members was short-staffing and the risks associated with it," says Pearson. "Without enough skilled staff on shift you cannot deliver the level of safe, compassionate care our seniors deserve."

HEU will also press for greater movement on a number of recommendations coming from the B.C. Ombudsperson's landmark investigation into seniors' care, including the need to create enforceable standards of care and better protections for residents and workers disrupted by large-scale staff turnover that result from contracting out.

"We look forward to a meaningful and productive discussion on the issues that matter most to our members and the residents in their care," says Pearson.

The Seniors Advocate has a broad mandate to monitor system-wide issues affecting the well-being of B.C. seniors and make recommendations to government.

July 17, 2014