



What's really happening in health care?

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Front-line providers not allowed to tell

The gag order on front-line health care workers at St. Pauls Hospital is not an isolated case, says Health Sciences Association President Cindy Stewart.

-Health care providers are afraid to speak out about the deteriorating conditions in the health care system. Conditions for patients are getting worse, and the health care professionals are under a gag order. They cant tell the public whats really going on, or they will lose their jobs," Stewart said.

For example, she said, health professionals at Mount St. Josephs Hospital in Vancouver have known for months that the government plans to close the long-term care facility at the hospital but were unable to speak out and alert the public about the planned closure.

And HSA members report the same gag orders are being imposed right around the province.

-At this past weekends HSA convention, we heard horror stories from around the province from dietitians who are deeply concerned about the quality ... and even quantity ... of food provided to seniors in long-term and palliative care. In some cases, frail, elderly people are going without because the private food providers are cutting corners to meet their budgets and just dont bring enough food. Patients are left to fend for themselves," Stewart said.

-The memo from Providence Health Cares vice president of medical affairs says it all: 'we are attempting to avoid negative media coverage in the pre-election period.'

-Thats unacceptable. Health care professionals are in their jobs to help people, not to cover up the truth about whats happening to health care in British Columbia," Stewart said.

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