



What's up and what's not with union actions and grievances

November 1, 1999

The Report: November / December 1999 vol.20 num.4

HSA calls for review of Vancouver area rehab services

HSA is urging the Vancouver / Richmond Health Board to delay making wide-ranging changes to the way rehab services are delivered in the region until the Board's own review of rehab programs and services is complete.

The health board was scheduled to vote this month on a plan to transfer all rehab services in the region to an enhanced site at George Pearson. This proposal would see the building of an "adaptive development complex" on the Pearson site with proceeds from the sale of the GF Strong premises, and amalgamate rehab services from Vancouver Hospital, GF Strong, and Pearson.

HSA President Cindy Stewart said making such wide-ranging decisions before the completion of the planned regional review just doesn't make sense.

"Our view is that it's too early for the Vancouver / Richmond Health Board to undertake such a huge change in the provision of rehab services without a better idea of the current needs in this region", she said. "And one of the best ways for the Board to gather relevant information is by talking directly to health care workers who provide the services."

She added, "We also understand that the Board's staff will be making a report to the Board on November 25 regarding this plan and its feasibility, and we expect the report will recommend a similar delay and consultation process."

Welcome to six new members at PACS

HSA welcomes six new members at Peace Arch Community Services working at the Specialized Adult Services program.

These members assist developmentally delayed adults in acquiring life skills to become more independent, in preparation for having their own home, living in a group home setting, or entering a family home.

Layoffs at John Howard Society

Unionized community social service workers can take heart: there's help available even if you are displaced from your job.

Ten staff members at John Howard Society were laid off this month after the closure of a two-month old residential program. The *Odyssey* program was to have provided residential treatment and counselling for youths referred through the legal system. *Odyssey* was structured as a fee-for-service program, with services paid for by the referring agency.

However, according to the John Howard Society, most agencies were not able to refer youths to this program because the government has cut \$20 million from residential program funding this year.

HSA Steward Paul Geoghegan at John Howard Society said having a union on side during this difficult time has made all the difference. "A lot of us feel that the layoff and bumping scenario is our worst nightmare of being a unionized site, but the fact that we are unionized allowed us to have some input and ensure some

accountability in this situation," he said.

However, he is disappointed that the recently negotiated access to retraining and other resources offered through the Healthcare Labour Adjustment Agency are not immediately available. "I do understand that this is a new process, but I'm disappointed this wasn't more solidly in place before this layoff came." HSA is currently calling on the Ministry of Children and Families to provide bridging resources to these and other social service sector workers until the details of the HLAA access are worked out.

"I think that the union has done very well," Geoghegan said. "I can't say enough about our Labour Relations Officer Dave Martin's part in this. His experience and advice have been exceptionally valuable."

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