

People deserve to have jobs that lift them out of poverty

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The Editor,

Re: “Despite hype, census points to fundamental problem,” May 6 Now editorial.

Your editorial rightly points to the issue of more people working for less money as a reason for B.C.’s shocking decline in real wage rates, revealed in last week’s census report. We don’t need to look any further than our own hospitals to see this in action.

Between the 15 per cent wage cut forced on all 43,000 Hospital Employees’ Union members in 2004 to the massive privatization of over 8,000 hospital cleaning, food service and other jobs that began in 2002, government policy has taken a bite out of British Columbians’ earning power.

Today, contracted-out hospital support workers find themselves struggling to afford a decent quality of life. That’s not good for families, communities or the province’s economy.

That’s why the Hospital Employees’ Union has engaged in a living wage campaign. This important anti-poverty tool calls on health authorities to be accountable for ensuring the corporations who employ support service workers in hospitals provide fair, family-supporting wages and safe working conditions.

All workers in B.C. deserve to have work that lifts them out of poverty, and doesn’t keep them there.

And this includes the people who are on the front lines of infection control and patient care in our health-care facilities.

Judy Darcy
Hospital Employees’ Union