



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWS RELEASE

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Health care has highest occupational injury rate of all sectors in B.C.

Today, the Hospital Employees' Union joins labour allies and communities across the country to mark the National Day of Mourning for workers killed, injured or disabled on the job, and for those who have died from work-related incidents or occupational disease.

“On this day, we not only recognize workers injured or killed on the job, but we also reaffirm our commitment to hold employers to account for ensuring safe, healthy workplaces,” says HEU secretary-business manager Jennifer Whiteside.

“Health care continues to have the highest workplace injury rate of all sectors in this province,” adds Whiteside. “And care aides – particularly those working in long-term care sites – are even more vulnerable to injuries and exposure to violence on the job.”

WorkSafeBC reports, “The top three incident types – assaults, hitting, and bodily reactions/exertions – account for 70 per cent of all acts of workplace violence within the Health Care and Social Services subsector.”

The health sector injury rate is one and a half times higher than all B.C. workplaces combined (measured in accepted claims for every 100 person years worked). In long-term care facilities, the rate is more than four times higher.

From 2006 to 2015, sixty-one per cent of violence-related injury claims came from the health care sector, and women accounted for 80 per cent of those claims. Forty-one per cent were made by care aides – more than any other group in health care.

According to WorkSafeBC's October 2016 statistics, there were 145,803 workers injured on the job; 2,970 occupational disease claims, and 122 workers who died because of a workplace incident in 2015.

The National Day of Mourning was officially recognized by the federal government in 1991, eight years after the day of remembrance was launched by the Canadian Labour Congress. The Day of Mourning has since spread to about 80 countries around the world.

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For more information, contact Brenda Whitehall, communications officer, 604-880-8635.