



Health care workers rally to demand restoration of immigration pathways

HEU members call on next federal government to restore B.C. PNP spots

[BURNABY] – Health care workers rallied outside Surrey Memorial Hospital today to demand justice for migrant health care workers facing deportation due to federal cuts to the provincial nominee program (PNP). Led by the Hospital Employees' Union (HEU), the event featured powerful testimony from affected HEU members and union leaders.

“Let’s be clear, these workers are not ‘temporary’ – they are essential,” says HEU secretary-business manager Lynn Bueckert. “They are trained, committed, and doing the difficult, often invisible work that keeps our health care system going.”

“These HEU members are Canadian in every way that matters – except on paper,” says Bueckert. “And we are demanding that Canada’s next national government restore their pathway to stay in the country and continue their work in health care.”

The federal government’s decision to reduce the number of PNP spots allocated to B.C. has left more than 500 health care workers in the Fraser and Coastal regions at risk of deportation this year when their visas expire. Many had accepted critical health care jobs under the belief that work with a health authority would lead to permanent residency.

“We took these health care jobs during a staffing shortage, with the promise that we would get status,” says Jasveer, a housekeeping aide. “But these abrupt changes leave many of us in the dust, without any options.”

HEU is calling for urgent federal action to restore the number of PNP spots allocated to B.C. and to create a dedicated federal permanent residency pathway for non-clinical health care workers who are working full-time for B.C.’s health authorities.

HEU is B.C.’s biggest health care union, with 60,000+ members. Since 1944, HEU has advocated for better working and caring conditions and defended public health care.