

BULLETIN

## HSA urges VGH not to dismantle domestic violence program

August 9, 2010

Less than a week after a sudden announcement to emergency room staff, Vancouver General Hospital has already begun dismantling a much-needed Domestic Violence Program that has been serving the community for 18 years.

The outpatient Domestic Violence Program serves 20-25 clients per week, providing counselling for patients experiencing violent relationships. The program also provides support, education and referrals for child protection and safety planning.

The surprise move is a blow to clients of the program, as well as professional and community groups who rely on the programs expertise.

Health Sciences Associations President, Reid Johnson, says elimination of the program is short-sighted. -This program is often the first time that victims of domestic violence are referred for professional help," he said. -VGH says they are dismantling the outpatient program in order to re-deploy the resources in a new inpatient adult guardianship program. We question the need to dismantle an effective existing program in order to do this," he said.

-We urge VGH to maintain the outpatient Domestic Violence Program, and allocate any increase in resources to a new program," he said. -The current plan constitutes a cut in service; its unfair to characterize it as an increase."

-The expertise of the social work staff in the Domestic Violence Program is exemplary," he said. -In addition to her position in the Domestic Violence Program, this member is a clinical assistant professor of the Department of Emergency Medicine at UBC, and is also a recipient of the Canadian Association of Social Workers Distinguished Service Award for her work in providing services to victims of domestic violence," he said.

-But as of July 28, this award-winning social worker was given notice of layoff. There was no consultation. A hospital spokesperson has said community groups will be expected to offer the cancelled services ... but those groups have already been suffering a series of cuts, too."

-As the union representing most hospital social workers across BC, we are working with the laid off social worker and with the VGH administration. We urge VGH to reconsider the dismantling of this very important Domestic Violence Program."

HSA President Reid Johnson earned his Masters of Social Work at UBC. HSA is the union representing 16,000 health sciences professionals who deliver diagnosis, treatment, and recovery as part of BCs modern health care team.

**UPDATE:** support the VGH Domestic Violence outpatient program through the [BC Health Coalition's Action Alert](#)

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