

BULLETIN

## HSA calls on VGH not to risk lives of vulnerable women

August 18, 2010

For immediate release

Despite strong community opposition and media attention, the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority continues to dismantle the outpatient Domestic Violence Program at Vancouver General Hospital. The 18-year-old program is slated to close at the end of this week.

HSA President Reid Johnson said the sudden closure of this program puts vulnerable women at risk.

-In-patient care is very different from the care that was being provided through the outpatient program being shut down this week," he said. -In-patient means a woman was battered badly enough to be admitted to hospital. An outpatient program seeks to prevent such incidents from ever occurring." Johnson added that inpatient care is several more times more expensive than outpatient counselling: -Cutting outpatient care will result in higher medical costs overall, in addition to suffering," he said.

Johnson called on VCH to listen to concerned women and community groups, and rescind the closure. -Over the last three weeks since the surprise announcement of this closure, women who have had the benefit of the programs services have been speaking out through CBC TV and [The Tyee](#), urging VCH to reconsider," he said.

-In addition, concerned community groups have mobilized their networks. The Battered Womens Services Society ... which may be among the community groups to whom VCH plans to transfer current clients ... are saying they dont have the capacity to absorb any new clients," Johnson said. The BWSS currently has a 100-woman waiting list for counselling. He noted that the BC Association of Social Workers swiftly condemned the closure, and the BC Health Coalition has issued an [Action Alert](#)."

-Within just a few days, the BC Health Coalition has been copied on 300 letters to Health Minister Falcon, VGH, and VCH," Johnson said. -Theyre reporting an overwhelming response to the closure, with almost 10,000 hits on their Action Alert webpage."

The Health Sciences Association is the union representing more than 16,000 health science professionals who are part of BCs modern health care team.

TAKE ACTION: see the BC Health Coalitions [Action Alert here and send a letter](#) to Health Minister Kevin Falcon and VCH CEO Dr. David Ostrow.

RELATED: [HSA urges VGH not to dismantle domestic violence program](#)

- 30 -

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