

BULLETIN

## Vancouver City Council passes motion calling for the restoration of VGH domestic violence program

October 8, 2010

In a unanimous vote last night, Vancouver City Council passed a motion calling for the restoration of the outpatient Domestic Violence Program at Vancouver General Hospital.

VGH closed the clinic in a surprise move this summer, with no consultation with emergency room staff or with the community.

HSA Region 4 Director Brendan Shields spoke in support of the motion on behalf of the union.

He told councillors that on July 27, VGH suddenly announced to emergency room staff that the program was being closed. -On the next day, the social worker was already given layoff notice," he said.

-The sudden closure caused immediate and wide-spread public and media outcry ... including features on CBC TV (French and English), The [Georgia Straight](#), and [The Tyee](#)," he said.

Shields also told Vancouver City Council about the women who had benefited from the expert counselling and safety planning offered through the program.

-With great courage, vulnerable women who had benefited from the clinic have been speaking out to the media with their stories. They have been telling us about their harrowing experiences, and we join with them in urging that the clinic remain open."

HSA President Reid Johnson says the support of Vancouver City Council will carry significant weight with the Ministry of Health. -At last night's council meeting, Vancouver City Manager Dr. Penny Ballem was asked for her expert opinion. She told councillors that when she was Assistant Deputy Minister of Health in the Liberal government, these motions from municipal councils from all across BC were extremely influential in determining the decisions made at the ministry level," he said.

-I hope Minister Kevin Falcon will listen to Vancouver City Council.

-Vancouver has a tragic recent history ... and ongoing issues ... with violence against women in this city. I know city councillors are working hard to do everything they can to prevent further tragedy," he said.

-I thank Councillor Ellen Woodsworth for bringing this motion forward, and Councillor Geoff Meggs for seconding the motion," Johnson said.

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