



HSA calls for consultation before Chilliwack General Hospitals rehab unit closure

June 15, 2012

The union representing rehabilitation therapists at Chilliwack General Hospital is joining community leaders in calling for consultation before the hospitals rehab unit is unilaterally closed.

The Health Sciences Association represents physiotherapists, occupational therapists, social workers, and other rehab specialists across BC, including at Chilliwack General Hospital.

HSA President Reid Johnson said a unilateral closure of the rehab unit is a big blow to the community. He questioned how the new plan for Fraser Health therapy services was developed.

-Doctors and rehab specialists were not consulted on this closure," he said.

-Our physiotherapists, occupational therapists, social workers, and other rehab specialists work closely with the patients at the Chilliwack rehab unit to build mobility, independence, and hope. We hope Fraser Health will consult with us before making unilateral changes that will affect the way patients are treated," he said.

-Its a half-hour drive from Chilliwack to the hospital in Abbotsford. This may not seem like a big deal ... but when youre in rehab therapy, that can seem like an insurmountable difficulty," he said.

-Patients in Chilliwack deserve a rehab plan that is developed with full consultation with medical and rehab professionals. Its clinically proven that effective rehab therapy saves the health system a significant amount of cash, because people can go back to living productive lives. Conversely, if left untreated, patients can backslide or land back in hospital requiring additional surgery or other expensive and painful procedures," he said.

-Rehab therapy is a crucial part of the modern health care system. Patients deserve to know that their therapy is a valued part of a strategic health plan developed in consultation with medical and rehab professionals -- instead of being given sudden, knee-jerk changes at every turn," he said.

Health Sciences Association of BC is the union that represents 17,000 health science professionals who deliver the modern health care services British Columbians depend on for their good health.

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