

NEWS RELEASE



April 13, 2006

Cowichan District Hospital Nurses Win New Position in ER

RNs in the Emergency Department CDH have been raising concerns regarding the safety and quality of care available to patients in their ER for nearly two years. Dozens of Professional Responsibility Forms (PRFs) were filed by nurses when they felt care was compromised. In January of this year the ER nurses made a presentation to the Vancouver Island Health Authority Board (VIHA). In February and March the RNs went public with their concerns in an effort to secure what they believed was required to improve the care available to Cowichan Valley residents.

Following a meeting with managers on April 4, a revised plan for increased nursing staffing in the Cowichan District Hospital ER was agreed to. The end result was that one more Emergency certified RN was added 24/7 around the clock. The ER nurses are very pleased with the outcome.

“I believe it shows that these nurses’ concerns regarding bed shortages, staffing and bed flow are now being taken more seriously. The outcome for patients will hopefully be a better quality of care,” said Rhon L’Heureux, BCNU Regional Chair.

“I know that these nurses worked tirelessly to ensure that the issue of providing safe care for patients was addressed. I also know that many other members of the staff and community supported the nurses’ push for improvements. It’s encouraging to see management respond positively to the concerns that frontline nurses are raising. VIHA representatives do deserve credit for their actions,” concluded L’Heureux.

BC Nurses’ Union president Debra McPherson said, “These nurses demonstrated leadership and extraordinary determination in their efforts to increase the quality of care for the residents of the Valley. I’m hopeful that future processes that will come into effect with the proposed collective agreement will move things along more quickly. It’s important that nurses’ voices are listened to at the ward level and that the issues of professional care and safety they raise are acted on expeditiously.

I just want to thank them for their dedication and offer my congratulations to them for a job well done.”

**For further information contact: Debra McPherson,
BCNU president 1-604-209-4253**

**Rhon L’Heureux,
BCNU Pacific Rim Region Chair 250 713-7066**

British Columbia Nurses' Union

4060 REGENT STREET, BURNABY, B.C. V5C 6P5 TELEPHONE (604) 433-2268 FAX (604) 433-7945 TOLL FREE 1-800-663-9991