



**For immediate release**  
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## **Care for seniors at breaking point in IHA--BCGEU**

*Union will forward Okanagan workers' concerns about workload, staff shortages to Ombudsman's probe into seniors care*

Front-line health workers who care for seniors in four Okanagan facilities say they're stressed to the max physically, mentally and emotionally because government policies don't allow them to provide the level of care that seniors need and deserve.

And their union, the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union, promises it will raise their concerns along with those of residents' families when it makes a presentation to the B.C. Ombudsman's probe into seniors care later this month in Victoria.

"Our members are under intense pressure every day to meet the increasingly complex care needs of seniors in long-term care facilities without having enough staffing and the necessary resources to be able to do the job," says BCGEU president Darryl Walker.

"It's reached a real breaking point," says Walker who heard health care workers' concerns during a visit to Vernon in late September.

BCGEU executive member Brenda Brown, who heads the union's health workers section, says the crisis was created by government policies that result in seniors being older and frailer when they get into long-term care.

"Seniors' care needs have skyrocketed in their complexity," says Brown, who toured the Gateby Care Facility in Vernon yesterday and also met separately with residents' families. "But government funding and staffing levels haven't kept pace."

Brown says Vernon and Kelowna care givers constantly raise their concerns with managers and the Interior Health Authority. "The IHA says it can't do anything because the Campbell government hasn't provided the resources needed to properly care for seniors," she says.

The union has received numerous submissions from members about the care crisis. Walker says these will be presented to B.C. Ombudsman Kim Carter's probe later this month. Carter called the probe because of the volume of complaints received by her office about poor care for seniors.

BCGEU represents care givers at the Three Links Care Centre in Kelowna and Gateby Care Facility, Heritage Square, and Creekside Landing in Vernon.

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