



June 30, 2017

Carl Roy  
President & CEO  
Provincial Health Services Authority  
700-1380 Burrard St  
Vancouver, BC V6Z 2H3

Dear Mr. Roy,

**Re: Forensic Psychiatric Hospital**

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak to the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) Board and Executive yesterday about the urgent need to address violence and worker safety at the Forensic Psychiatric Hospital (FPH).

We believe the ongoing violence at FPH stems from an imbalance created by bringing dangerous individuals remanded to the facility by the courts into a hospital setting where staff have only personal alarm devices to protect themselves. In other words, a patient-centred approach is being pursued at the expense of staff safety.

In order to restore balance and safety in the workplace, the well-being of both patients and staff should be of equal priority. To this end, we are asking the PHSA to take both long-term and short-term actions.

Over the long-term we invite the PHSA to work with the BC Government & Service Employees' Union (BCGEU) to form a stakeholder's working group to examine best practices in terms of violence prevention, safety protocols, or to develop training specific to this facility. Board Chair Tim Manning made the practical suggestion to work through the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) committee to address work safety issues. However, the OHS culture and system at this facility is also damaged and in need of repair, highlighting the need to take a broader approach to solutions such as a working group.

In the short-term, we call on the PHSA to take the following steps:

1. Immediately re-instate the use of blocking pads as a minimum form of protection from violent patients.
2. Provide security staff with body armour when it is necessary to restrain a violent patient, including shields that allow visibility.



3. Immediately follow through to provide appropriate violence prevention training which has already been promised to members but not delivered.
4. Implement the use of pass through doors so staff don't have to enter a seclusion room with a potentially violent patient in order to give them food or medication.
5. Provide appropriate transfer chairs to move violent patients as staff have requested – not wheel chairs used to transport your average hospital patient.
6. And finally, commit to providing crisis intervention or debriefing services to staff following a violent incident in order to address the mental abuse that workers endure.

We were encouraged yesterday because we all share the same goal – to keep workers safe in their workplace. We have the opportunity to work together with stakeholders from various backgrounds and expertise to establish a balance between patient-centred treatment and staff health and safety at this facility. As I said to the board, no one wants to see a headline that someone has been killed on the job at Forensic Psychiatric Hospital and we feel that this will indeed come to pass if we don't take action now.

I look forward to your response on this important matter, and to working constructively together to find solutions. Please contact my assistant Brian Gardiner at [brian.gardiner@bcgeu.ca](mailto:brian.gardiner@bcgeu.ca) or 604-291-9611 if you would like to set up a time to meet, and discuss next steps.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Smith  
President

CC:  
Tim Manning, Board Chair, PHSA