

LETTERS

Slogans do not fix health care challenges

When the Christy Clark government announced just after the last election four years ago their intention to create a “violence-free B.C.” they should have added, “unless you’re a nurse.”

In the case of nurses in B.C., violence in the workplace is a current and growing reality.

The latest WorksafeBC annual report reveals attacks on nurses accounted for an incredible 31 per cent of all injuries resulting from acts of violence in the workplace.

The BC Nurses’ Union (BCNU) points out that an average of 26 nurses a month suffer a violent injury at work — almost one a day.

The BCNU highlights some needed safety improvements such as properly trained, 24/7 security workers at health care facilities and enhanced education around violence in the workplace.

And across B.C., the working conditions frontline nurses face certainly can lead to a buildup of frustration — and sometimes violence — from those they are attending to.

My colleagues recently highlighted in Question Period the overcrowded conditions at the Abbotsford Regional Hospital emergency room due to staff shortages.

This was following separate, high-profile incidents where a three-year-old girl and a 56-year-old health care worker died after being sent home from that ER.

In visiting the hospital afterwards, the head of the BCNU said she saw patients “stacked up” in the ambulance bay, psychiatric patients being held in chairs designed for seniors, and nurses working 16-hour shifts.



VIEW FROM THE LEGISLATURE

MLA Doug Donaldson

In an ER that needs 88 nurses, only 56 are on staff.

Under these conditions province-wide, overstretched nurses working in overcrowded conditions are more susceptible to acts of violence.

Our hospitals are not immune from these conditions.

For example, constituents tell me the closure of the walk-in doctors clinic in Smithers has resulted in an increase of visits to the Bulkley Valley District Hospital’s ER as those without a family doctor (GP) seek help, meaning longer waits and overstretched nursing staff.

Reminds me of that other unfulfilled slogan from the Christy Clark government: “A GP for Me,” guaranteeing everyone in B.C. a family doctor. Another constituent said he and his family are 200th on a waitlist in Smithers for a GP.

Slogans alone will not address our health care challenges.

Following through on promises will go a long way to help address unacceptable situations like the violence nurses face in their workplaces.

Women against violence against women

March 8 was recently celebrated as International Women’s Day, a day to draw attention to girls and women and some of the hardships many of them endure. Many of the themes of previous years have been about ending violence directed towards women and girls.

One way we can make a move towards ending violence against women and girls would be to make it harder for underage children to access degrading, sexually explicit material online. Ninety per cent of sexually explicit internet pornography portrays violence against woman.

Unfortunately, the average age a male views his first pornographic image is around the age of 12.

These boys are impressionable and are being molded by images of violence against women. (For more info watch *Over 18* at the Smithers Christian Reformed Church, May 5 at 7 p.m.)

Scientific research shows that viewing pornography actually rewires the observer’s brain, creating in them (among other things) a higher tolerance for violence.

We need to start protecting the minds of our young boys, and in doing so, also protect the women of the future and how they will be treated by those around them.

Rachel Werk
Smithers

Let the past go

Most people are familiar with the fact that the ministry took our family apart in the early 1960s.

It was horrifying to everyone how they came for the children without notice.

Some of the younger children were brought to court without a chance to bathe.

The three of us sisters, in Lejac, were given a day’s notice that we were going to Burns Lake. They didn’t tell us why we were going to Burns Lake.

To this day I resent the brother who drove us in silence until we stopped at the courthouse. I saw my mother standing alone in tears.

I asked what was wrong. She said, “They’re taking all of you away from me, you’re all going into foster care.”

I watched in horror when court was over and how my sisters were dragged across the street into vehicles with strangers.

One foster parent had a hard time getting one of my sisters in the car because she was dragging her feet trying to stop them. That image and picture remains in our memories like it happened yesterday.

Three of us sisters spent 10 years

each at the residential school so we lost our family twice, once through residential school and another through foster homes.

In the early ‘70s we lost two brothers who both died very young.

We lost our parents and three other sisters all within a six-year period.

Last September my sisters and nieces put up a five-headstone feast in honour of the five deceased.

It was a wonderful feeling to complete their graves and to say our final goodbyes. I thank the hereditary chiefs who were hired and were involved. That part of our loss is now behind us.

We often hear other people constantly bringing up our past and how we were taken away.

As a residential school survivor, I would like to leave that part of my life in the past. I want to live for the present and the future. It’s very rude of others to keep us verbally informed of “what happened then.”

They bring the topic up without our permission and talk about it at every event.

My sisters are all working, have good jobs and some even continue

with their education.

We have learned to survive and have moved on. People who openly discuss it are not resolving anything.

What was done was done. It’s not going to change anything.

What you can change is how you approach the problem and at an appropriate time.

Yes, we lost our parents too. There is a difference between pity and empathy. What others are expressing is pity. We don’t need pity.

When others bring up the past though, they reinforce those traumatic memories.

In our healing journey these are not using good ethical morals.

Bringing up past traumas is a form of lateral violence when done without consent.

We’re all approachable, we can talk about it in private. At the same we can bond with those who felt they were blamed.

The biggest residential syndrome is the lack of bonding with relatives.

We can all heal if we approach each other in the right manner.

Irene (Augusta) Stevens
Burns Lake

TO: THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor policy

Letters are welcomed up to a maximum of 250 words.

Letters are subject to editing for clarity, brevity and legality.

All letters must include the writer’s name, daytime telephone number and hometown for verification purposes. Anonymous, or pen names will not be permitted. Not all submissions will be published.

Letters may be e-mailed to: editor@interior-news.com

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