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## **North Bay hospital staff take part in on-site solidarity day to keep addictions treatment program from closing**

**NORTH BAY, ON** – With the North Bay Regional Health Centre residential addictions program threatened with closure, tomorrow (Tuesday, January 7) hospital staff are taking the unprecedented step of holding a solidarity day to keep the beds from closing.

In support of patients in treatment and the nurses and therapists who provide the services, throughout Tuesday, NBRHC front-line staff will wear visible black and yellow stickers saying ‘Save North Bay addiction services’. It is the first of a series of large-scale actions planned to raise awareness about the value of in-hospital residential addictions treatment and build support to stop the closure of the program.

Since mid-December when the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) made the community aware about the planned closure of the only hospital-based residential addictions treatment beds in North Bay, hundreds of people have spoken out against the closure on social media and local media comments pages. Recently a former patient gave a first-person account about the importance of the North Bay hospital addictions treatment program, to his own recovery.

“We know that there have been some vocal appeals for Nipissing MPP Vic Fedeli to intervene to keep the 29 hospital addictions treatment beds in place. People do not want the program to close,” says Michael Hurley president of CUPE’s Ontario Council of Hospital Unions

Recently Mr. Fedeli made public statements about his priorities in 2020 to rebuild a local nursing home and to instate passenger train service in the North. “Surely the hospital’s residential addictions treatment program that helps save lives, should be among Mr. Fedeli’s list of priority issues,” says Hurley.

Since May 2019, 138 drug-related overdoses and 6 fatalities have been reported in North Bay.

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