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Angus Campbell Centre union has questions

To the editor:

Does anyone in Moose Jaw remember that the Ina Grafton Gage facility was closed down months ago due to a financial shortfall? Seniors were displaced from their homes and, as a result, several dozen local working people lost their jobs.

Now the Five Hills Health Region has dedicated \$1.3 million to renovate the aged Ina Grafton Gage building structure to use as a detox mental health facility, but to what purpose? There is a reputable and proven detox centre already operational on the outskirts of the city.

Members of SEIU-WEST working at Angus Campbell Centre have obtained all training requirements required by the Health Region. They are certified and have been providing excellent care and service to clients from the city and from across the province for over 35 years.

Five Hills has previously invested in Angus Campbell Centre through financial assistance with renovations needed at the Angus Campbell Centre by installing a water main and updating the fire system. As well, improvements were made to the security system for staff and client safety. The Angus Campbell Centre staff were offered promises (from Five Hills Health Region) to fund an evening nurse, a maintenance person and a full-time housekeeper.

Angus Campbell Centre has worked with the Five Hills Health Region to make the centre and staff accountable. The centre has always welcomed any opportunity to discuss improved service delivery options and additional services that could be provided to complement those offered as out-patient.

Now Five Hills have determined that it will not deliver on its promises made, nor will it continue to fund service delivered by this proven centre. Rather, it will spend additional dollars to start a new detox centre in a residential area, near the Cornerstone Christian School.

Should the residents of this community not have input as to whether this location is suitable? If community residents would have been informed, do you think it might have affected where many might have chosen to build their new homes? Has there been any consideration of the employees of the Angus Campbell Centre? What, if any effect, does this have on city revenues? Many of our questions remain unanswered.

This decision-making by Five Hills Health Region does not appear to be focused on maintaining jobs in Moose Jaw nor on the community. With the closure of Ina Grafton Gage and now the impending closure of Angus Campbell Centre, over 100 families in this area have been negatively affected.

What type of staffing are they going to provide to deal with difficult situations that arise at a detox centre? As our members have indicated, clients in need of detox are not bad people; however, they don't always make the best decisions. Impaired driving and quiet drug dropoffs are only two examples of circumstances that might arise. How will the decisions of Five Hills Health Region affect the lives those of the residents and students living in this area?

Barbara Cape, president of SEIU-WEST

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