

Centre reopens after bedbug blitz

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Fumigation to stamp out a possible bedbug infestation at Archie Courtnall Centre at Royal Jubilee Hospital is expected to be completed today.

The centre, which provides psychiatric emergency service, is expected to reopen and accept patients again, said Shannon Marshall, spokeswoman for the Vancouver Island Health Authority.

Marshall said patients and staff were moved into Eric Martin Pavilion after four dead bedbugs were found in the waiting area of the centre Monday.

Marshall said bedbugs are often found where turnover of people is high, including good hotels.

She also stressed the discovery had nothing to do with the health authority's request for proposals, issued in March, for new housekeeping contractors.

Cleaning and food services are now provided by subsidiaries of Compass Group Canada, which has held the contract for six years. On Vancouver Island, 13 facilities receive housekeeping services through Compass, including Victoria General, Royal Jubilee, Saanich Peninsula and Nanaimo Regional General hospitals.

Compass was rapped last year by the B.C. Centre for Disease Control for its response to a *C. difficile* outbreak in Nanaimo Regional General Hospital in which three people died. It was also cited by WorkSafe B.C. for failing to adequately train staff or properly investigate workplace accidents.

The takeover by Compass was part of a 2004 move by VIHA to contract out services. About 1,000 workers were laid off and hourly wages fell from \$19 to \$10.

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