

# VIHA cut supports for addicted and ill

By Paul Austin, Times Colonist June 18, 2010

Re: "Services increased to the mentally ill," June 12.

Can Alan Campbell, Vancouver Island Health Authority's director of mental health and addiction services, seriously believe his own statements about mental health services and funding?

Campbell states that "VIHA has increased funding over the past three years in Victoria for services to the homeless, mentally ill and addicted," then contradicts himself when he states that a shift in funding to the central and north Island "meant a reduction in services in the Greater Victoria area."

Secondly, while the establishment of the four Assertive Community Treatment outreach teams was both necessary and appreciated, many already well-established programs were cut completely or had their funding reduced.

Thirdly, Campbell states there has been a reduction in the number of individuals going to emergency rooms, but fails to mention that it has become increasingly difficult to get the required services there over the past year due to the fact that in 2009 VIHA eliminated six addiction counselling positions and closed 10 Eric Martin beds.

While correctly concluding that doing more "will take the combined and determined efforts of many agencies and the support of all citizens," Campbell needs to be honest with these hard-working agencies and supportive citizens about funding and services.

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