



Private health providers violating Canada Health Act

March 27, 2012

[Comox Valley Record](#)

Dear editor,

Thank you for focusing on medical diagnostics in your recent editorial (Record, March 20).

Health authorities in B.C. have determined that the average cost of providing an MRI scan within the public system is about \$225 per scan, provided free of charge to patients.

As noted in your editorial, private, for-profit clinics charge \$800 or more. This contravenes the principles of the Canada Health Act, by threatening equality of access to needed medical services.

The Vancouver Island Health Authority is to be congratulated for deciding to deliver its new mobile MRI service within the public system.

Not only will this be much more cost-effective, it will also ensure that residents of the North Island will have access to this mobile service based on the level of their medical need, not on the size of their wallet.

Your editorial also stated: -The best argument for privatized health care is how it takes people out of the taxpayer-funded system and reduces those wait times."

This argument is patently false. In B.C., and across the country, there is a chronic and serious shortage of the highly skilled technologists who run MRI and other medical diagnostic equipment. This means that for-profit clinics actually aggravate wait lists by draining much-needed technologists away from public hospitals.

By allowing for-profit clinics to continue operating, governments are threatening the integrity and sustainability of public health care.

Reid Johnson

Editor's note: Reid Johnson is the president of the Health Sciences Association of BC.

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