

BULLETIN

Budget fails to come clean on cuts to health care services says HSA

September 1, 2009

British Columbia families will bear the brunt of the provincial governments failure to adequately fund health care, Health Sciences Association of BC president Reid Johnson said in response to the provincial governments budget introduced today.

-This budget means that British Columbians, who rely on our health care system, will pay more for less." Johnson said.

The government will introduce additional costs to individuals and families by increasing MSP premiums by six per cent starting Jan. 1, 2010 ... and beyond, as the budget promises annual increases to the premiums.

The budget fails to outline the real impact on access to health care services for British Columbians, Johnson said. Health authorities have yet to release their service plans outlining more than \$300 million in budget cuts ordered by Health Minister Kevin Falcon in July.

-Its time for the Liberal government to come clean and stop downloading the responsibility for telling the true story about health care cuts to health authorities," Johnson said.

-In July, Health Minister Kevin Falcon delivered an edict to health authorities to slash their budgets. Those cuts will result in dramatic service reductions ... including diagnostic services like lab, x-ray, MRI, ultrasound and nuclear medicine," Johnson said.

-In a poll conducted by Ipsos Reid this summer, 88 per cent of British Columbians agreed the provincial government should not make cuts to medical tests like lab tests, x-rays, ultrasounds, CT scans and MRIs during the economic downturn," he said.

-British Columbians get it. Just because you arent diagnosed, doesnt mean youre not sick. The longer it takes to get a diagnosis, chances are you will be sicker and require more complex and expensive treatment and rehabilitation. The success of our health care system relies on diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation services and the highly skilled health science professionals who deliver them," Johnson said.

For HSAs 16,000 health science professionals, the two-year wage freeze imposed by government will compound the continuing crisis in recruitment and retention of the health science professionals essential to the health care team.

-Government needs to get serious about its commitment to health care. That includes a fair bargaining process that recognizes the contributions of all members of the health care team," Johnson said.

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