

BULLETIN

Private clinics: now is the time for government action to stop for-profit health care

September 20, 2010

New evidence of Canada Health Act violations, BC Court of Appeal ruling affirming government authority to audit for-profit clinics, and resolution at next weeks UBCM Convention all signal need for immediate government response.

New research conducted by the BC Health Coalition has revealed evidence that for-profit clinics across the province continue to openly charge patients additional fees to jump the queue for health services already covered by Medicare.

The report*, entitled [Eroding Public Medicare: BC Update 2010](#), is an update of a [groundbreaking 2008 national report](#) that documented an explosion of private for-profit health facilities across the country that are jeopardizing the equality and fairness of our health care system.

-This latest report confirms that Health Minister Falcon must take a leadership role in protecting British Columbians from private investors who are charging unlawful user fees and billing patients for health services already covered by Medicare," said Health Coalition Co-chair Rachel Tutte.

-The need for action has also been made clear by recent court decisions," she said, referring to a BC Court of Appeal ruling that confirms the Medical Services Commission has the authority to audit for-profit clinics in BC, including Dr. Brian Days Cambie Surgery Centre. Cambie is the largest for-profit clinic in BC and is leading a legal attack on BC's Medicare laws that protect patients from being charged user fees for publicly insured, medically necessary health care.

The report also comes in advance of a [resolution](#)** that is on the agenda at next weeks Union of BC Municipalities Convention in Whistler, and calls for a provincial moratorium on the expansion and funding of private, for-profit surgical and diagnostic clinics.

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*The BC 2010 Update can be downloaded from: <http://tiny.cc/z0vi4>

"The 2008 National Report -Eroding Public Medicare: Lessons and Consequences of For-Profit Health Care Across Canada" can be downloaded from: <http://tinyurl.com/2daltzy>

**Resolution B155 can be downloaded from: <http://tinyurl.com/22ofq3m>

The Health Sciences Association is a member of the BC Health Coalition.

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