

BULLETIN

Province's user fee plan penalizes BC patients

October 22, 2010

BC Health Coalition calls on province to reverse its directive requiring health authorities to charge fees to patients who need hospital care to recover from illness or injury

The BC Health Coalition is concerned that core hospital services previously provided to patients free of charge as required by the Canada Health Act are now subject to so-called "convalescent care" fees that health authorities began to impose over the spring and summer.

The BCHC has received a string of calls from patients and family members who report being charged for recovery time before returning home. The complaints follow a decision earlier this year that saw government quietly direct health authorities to charge \$29.40 per day.

-My 88-year-old father-in-law fell and broke his hip. My family was told that our options were to move him to convalescent care, for which he would be charged a fee, or he could go home," said Janet Jones of Langley. -He is still in need of care so going home before he recovers is not an option. Now we are receiving bills. My father-in-law did not pay taxes his whole life only to be charged fees for care as a senior."

-This familys situation is exactly what Medicare is designed to protect against - times of health difficulty for individuals - and families should not be compounded by financial burden," said BCHC co-chair Alice Edge.

The BCHC is concerned that the fees are a cash grab from the wallets of patients when they most need care, and could lead to higher long-term costs if patients end up leaving hospitals before they are ready in order to avoid the fees.

BCHC representatives attended Wednesdays Vancouver Coastal Health Authority open board meeting to seek information about how the fees are being implemented in the region. -We asked what explanation the Ministry has provided the health authority with as to why they are to all of a sudden charging for hospital care services that have always been covered under Medicare, as directed by the Canada Health Act," said Edge. -We were told that an answer would not be addressed to the public in the room at that time because it was a "detail. This is no detail - this is a fundamental question that British Columbians deserve an answer to."

The BCHC is calling on the government to scrap the fees and address long-term costs by fully funding home and community care services.

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

[Click here](#) to send a letter to Minister Falcon to demand an end to convalescent care fees.

[Printer-friendly version](#)

Type:

[Bulletins](#)

Topic:

[Issues, Campaigns and Government Relations](#)

- [Print](#)
- [PDF](#)

180 East Columbia
New Westminster, BC V3L 0G7

Website
www.hsabc.org

Telephone 604-517-0994
1-800-663-2017