

BULLETIN

Cambie Audit: Government Must Stop Illegal Billing by Private Clinics - Medical Services Commission Audit of Cambie Surgery Centre and Specialist Referral Clinic Reveals Shocking Extent of Illegal Billing

July 19, 2012

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA--(Marketwire - July 19, 2012) - The BC Health Coalition is calling on the provincial government to undertake a full-scale review of all for-profit surgical facilities in the province in light of findings released by the Medical Services Commission yesterday. The MSC audit report shows that almost half of all the services examined at the Cambie and Specialist Referral clinics were eligible for public health insurance coverage, and that the clinics engaged in illegal billing regarding almost all of these eligible services.

"These findings validate research already conducted by the BC Health Coalition which found evidence suggesting that for-profit clinics across the province continue to openly charge patients illegal fees for health services already covered by Medicare," said BCHC co-chair Rachel Tutte. "But the extent of illegal billing uncovered at the Cambie Surgical Centre and Specialist Referral Clinic is even greater than we expected."

The MSC audit released yesterday revealed nearly \$500,000 in illegal fees related to just a small sample of the total services provided at the two private clinics. If similar billing practices exist at the 20 other for-profit surgical clinics in the province, then patients and BC's public insurance plan are potentially being billed illegally for millions of dollars.

"Government must audit all private clinics in B.C., and take a leadership role in protecting British Columbians from for-profit clinics that are charging illegal fees for health services covered by Medicare," said Tutte.

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