

BULLETIN

## Mobilizing to protect health and social services

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by CINDY STEWART



The full effects of the Campbell era in British Columbia hit us on April 1, the first day of the new fiscal year.

In the coming weeks and months we will learn exactly what the regional health authorities have planned in their mission to achieve the funding targets put in place by the provincial government. We have had a sneak preview of the options the local health authorities have considered as they work to meet the budget targets set by the Ministry of Health Services. Health care unions have exposed plans by health authorities around the province to eliminate services, reduce patient care and close health care facilities.

As of the new fiscal year, the list of cuts, closures and fees makes it painfully clear what the Liberal government has accomplished in its first year as government.

Medicare premiums up; services de-listed; Pharmacare cut; ambulance service reduced; increased fares for public transit; reduced welfare rates; legal aid slashed; elimination of Student Summer Works Program, elimination of training and work experience programs for students; minimum wage lowered to \$6 for young people; increased tuition fees, student grants eliminated; Human Rights Commission budget reduced by one-third; closed residential tenancy offices; courthouses closed; reduced coroner services; downloading of policing costs to municipalities.

And this list is not exhaustive.

The Campbell cuts affect every British Columbian. One way to effectively speak out against the cuts is to join with our co-workers, neighbours and community groups.

On February 23 I joined HSA members in Victoria for the BC Federation of Labour rally that attracted an estimated 20,000 protestors. On the same day, members throughout the province participated in events organized in their communities. A month later, on March 23, HSA members joined with the Vancouver community coalition to protest the Campbell government agenda. Another BCFL rally is planned for May 25 in Vancouver.

Working with our labour and community partners has been an effective way of giving voice to concerns that HSA members have about the future of the services you provide in your communities. And it is necessary that we continue to speak out.

In this issue of *The Report*, you will find a BC Federation of Labour leaflet. It is important that you add your voice to the many who are anxious about the future of our province. Please take the time to share your thoughts, and return the tear-off card to your HSA steward. The BC Federation of Labour will deliver cards from all affiliates to the government, underscoring the consequences of the decisions that they have made and

giving voice to those who do not feel they are being heard. 

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180 East Columbia  
New Westminster, BC V3L 0G7

Website  
[www.hsabc.org](http://www.hsabc.org)

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