

## HSA to watch hospital funding changes closely

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PATIENTS MUST ALWAYS BE TOP PRIORITY FOR INNOVATIONS IN HEALTH CARE

**HEALTH MINISTER KEVIN FALCON** has announced pilot programs for shifting hospitals to funding based on the number of patients they treat.

HSA President Reid Johnson says he welcomes innovative changes in the delivery of health care, but will be watching as the patient-focused funding initiative unfolds.

-Theres no question our health care system needs to be innovative and responsive," Johnson said.

-But the governments announcement raises more questions than it answers. Time will tell if the project does lead to reduced waiting lists and a more efficient health care system. Ultimately, the priority has to be patients, and HSA will be watching to ensure patients are not forgotten in the focus on efficiency," he said.

-I am concerned that what Minister Falcon is proposing is not patient-based funding, but activity-based funding. If funding will be structured to reward performance based on volume, hospitals will be forced into competing for funding based solely on their ability to push patients out the door. And thats not good health care," Johnson said.

He said that British Columbians have already seen a deterioration of access to rehabilitation for patients as services like physiotherapy have been moved out of the public system and into private delivery.

-If you dont have an extended health care plan ... only about 50 per cent of British Columbians do ... and cant afford to pay for physiotherapy and other rehabilitation services, chances are you are not going to get the rehabilitation you need to make you better. Sending patients home without proper recovery is not the right health care choice," he said.

Johnson also questioned the \$250-million price tag for the patient- focused funding project.

-Where is that money coming from? Are health authorities going to have to come up with the money out of their budgets? That could spell government forced health authorities to take \$360 million out of their budgets and it resulted in severe cuts to services, including cutting 10,000 MRIs, and cutting hundreds of surgeries ... which resulted in driving up wait lists." 

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