



Government tables budget at the expense of health services for BC

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The bulk of savings announced in the Liberal government's last-ditch attempt to convince British Columbians they can present a balanced budget is coming out of the health care system, Finance Minister Mike de Jong said today in releasing the Liberal government's last budget before this spring's election.

"If you reduce spending in health care, you reduce services to British Columbians. It's that simple," said Reid Johnson, President of the Health Sciences Association of BC, the union representing 17,000 members of the modern health care team.

"Government is counting on restructuring the delivery of lab services, and containing physician and drug costs to reduce the health care budget. Based on vague ideas about how that might result in savings, they're telling British Columbians that direct health care services won't suffer. It just doesn't add up," he said.

"And they continue to increase the amount British Columbians are forced to pay for health care coverage through continued increases in MSP premiums," he added.

"There is no plan to focus on the health programs British Columbians count on. There is no plan to address the shortages in the specialized health science professions that lead to longer wait lists and delays in service," he said.

"The Liberal government is running out of time. This is a short-sighted budget focused only on addressing a political agenda," Johnson said.

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