

BULLETIN

Public health defenders win right to speak in court case

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The BC Supreme Court has ruled that a group of public health care supporters that includes the BC Health Coalition and Canadian Doctors for Medicare, may submit expert evidence in a BC case that is attempting to destroy Canada's Medicare system.

Dr. Brian Day and his for-profit clinics began a legal attack on Medicare in 2009 that could turn Canada's health care system into a US-style system. The case will go to court in September, 2014.

The clinics are trying to strike down provincial health care legislation that limits the for-profit delivery of medically necessary services, claiming that this violates the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

HSA has played a key role in supporting the BC Health Coalition as they coordinate a group of public health care supporters who are intervening in the case. This intervenor group has now been granted the right to submit the following expert evidence:

Marie-Claude Prémont, Professor of Law at the École Nationale d'Administration Publique will provide evidence on how restraints on Medicare after Quebec's Chaoulli case undermined patient access to care; and Dr. David Himmelstein, Professor in the CUNY School of Public Health at Hunter College and visiting Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, will provide evidence on the US health care system, including the negative impacts that for-profit health care and health insurance could have in Canada.

This is an important win for public health care, and HSA members can be proud of the role they have played in achieving it.

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