

BULLETIN

Medicare case on hold

September 29, 2014



BC Health Coalition Chair Edith MacHattie and Dr. Vanessa Brcic of Canadian Doctors for Medicare address the media outside Cambie Surgical Clinic September 29

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BY CAROL RIVIERE

DR. Brian Day's attempt to use the courts to bring US-style, TWO-tier health care to Canada was scheduled to go to trial on September 8.

At his request, and with the agreement of the provincial government, the court recently postponed the trial for six months to give these parties an opportunity to settle the case.

Edith MacHattie, HSA's BC Health Coalition representative, has been following the case closely.

"Given the BC Liberals' record of supporting increased privatization and for-profit health care, and the fact that this settlement is being negotiated behind closed doors, I'm very concerned that the terms of the settlement may damage our public health care system," said MacHattie.

Day operates the Vancouver-based for-profit Cambie Surgery Centre, infamous for unlawfully billing patients for health care services - in some cases, up to seven times the lawful amount. A government audit found nearly \$500,000 in unlawful billing during a single 30-day sample period at Cambie and the associated Specialist Referral Clinic.

"Brian Day's plan to bring US-style health care to Canada would be disastrous for Canadians," said MacHattie. "I work as an occupational therapist with children who have special needs, and I know their families could never afford the kind of for-profit care that Dr. Day supports. I also know that a for-profit system will drain scarce health professionals and public dollars, weakening the public system that all of us rely on."

"What Brian Day wants will only make challenges in the public system, like wait times, worse," said MacHattie. "There are many innovative pilot projects across Canada that have been shown to reduce waits, cut costs and improve care. We should put our resources into expanding these proven innovations in the public system, so that all Canadians can benefit."

MacHattie urges HSA members to let the provincial government know that any settlement of the case must protect the basic foundation of Medicare. "It's critical that everyone who supports Medicare let our provincial government know that they expect a strong settlement that protects every patient's right to receive care based on their medical need - not on their ability to pay."

Members can send an e-mail to BC's Premier and Minister of Health from the BC Health Coalition's website at bchealthcoalition.ca.

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