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BC Government fails to address seniors' health care crisis

The BC government is once again poised to conclude another session of the legislature without taking action to resolve seniors' health care concerns. One year ago, Patricia Baird tabled the Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' report, *Aging Well in BC**, which was commissioned by the BC government to provide recommendations on how BC can best meet the needs of our growing seniors population. Seniors from across the province participated in this process in good faith, and they are still waiting for action on the key recommendations.

Baird's report included recommendations calling for improved and expanded home support services and sufficient residential care beds. In the year since the Baird report, problems have escalated with seniors' health care. According to a recent Statistics Canada report**, BC spends the least of any province on residential care for seniors. In 2005-2006, BC spent \$1874/capita on seniors' residential care compared with the \$3201 spent by Newfoundland. In a letter sent today to Premier Gordon Campbell, the BC Health Coalition calls on the government to implement changes that will immediately improve seniors' health care.***

"Around the province, our coalition members are reporting concerns with staffing ratios and quality of care at residential care facilities," says Joyce Jones, co-chair, BC Health Coalition. "The government needs to act now to implement changes that will improve enforcement of standards at residential care facilities, improve accountability, and reverse the trend towards privatization of the residential care sector. "

"Seniors are suffering because of the government's lack of action. BC's seniors deserve the kind of high quality, accountable health care that is provided by public or not-for-profit," adds Jones.

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* *Aging Well in BC* available at: http://www.cserv.gov.bc.ca/seniors/council/docs/Aging_Well_in_BC.pdf

**<http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/83-237-XIE/2008001/bfront1.htm>

*** BC Health Coalition letter available on our website at: www.bchealthcoalition.ca.

**Supporting positive, public solutions to
make Medicare stronger in British Columbia!**

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