



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWS RELEASE

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Budget politics mean uncertainty for health care

Public solutions are at hand, but lack of future funding commitments foreshadow expanded privatization; higher costs for patients

It's time to stop playing budget politics with British Columbians' health care and to start putting in place proven public solutions that will improve care for patients, says the Hospital Employees' Union.

The union says the B.C. Liberal government's announcement yesterday that it will delay health budget forecasts for future years obstructs the long-range planning needed now to strengthen public health care.

"Clearly, the finance minister had no choice but to correct her unrealistic health budget projections for 2007 to safeguard patient care in the short term," says HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy.

"But by holding back health budget forecasts for future years this government is continuing to manufacture a sustainability crisis in health care that can only mean more privatization and higher costs for patients in the long run."

"How can our health authorities possibly put the planning and solutions into place that are needed to reduce surgical waitlists and relieve pressure in our ERs, without knowing their future resources?"

The Hospital Employees' Union says there are many proven public solutions here in B.C. and in other jurisdictions.

"The announced \$100 million innovation fund could be an opportunity for government and health authorities to implement those solutions across the province," says Darcy.

"But it will be a lost opportunity if this fund is used to bankroll a series of unproven and costly privatization schemes."

