



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION
NEWSLETTER

PLEASE POST

Focus on health care solutions

HEU's Judy Darcy calls for public solutions in a letter to the Kamloops Daily News on eve of first "Conversation on Health" forums.

Kamloops residents will be the first to test-drive the B.C. Liberals' Conversation On Health public forums on Friday and Saturday. But like other British Columbians, they can be forgiven for wondering who's really in the driver's seat.

Since the "conversation" began, the government has offered little more than doomsday predictions about health care funding and looming demographic pressures.

They have been long on drama and very short on the kind of solutions British Columbians expect and deserve.

The good news is that workable, public solutions to surgery waits and over-burdened ERs are right here in our own backyard -- in B.C. and across Canada. They show that universally accessible health care is cost effective and can meet our province's health needs.

A pilot project at Richmond Hospital dedicated two operating rooms to orthopedic surgery, streamlined procedures and reduced wait lists by 75 per cent. Ontario adopted our model, but in B.C., it's languishing on the shelves.

And a one-stop joint replacement assessment clinic in North Vancouver -- where scheduling is centralized and care is co-ordinated between physicians -- reduced wait times to see surgeons from 50 weeks to between two and four weeks.

Closer to home, the Interior Health Authority and the Hospital Employees' Union found an alternative to the privatization that delivers little more than low wages and high staff turnover in hospitals at the Coast.

Instead, co-operation and collaboration between the IHA and HEU achieved cost efficiencies in laundry services and preserved decent, family-supporting jobs in interior communities. These are just a few of many examples.

Medicare is an asset that belongs to all of us. But telling British Columbians they can't afford their health care is nothing but a conversation stopper. Instead, let's have a conversation that's about solutions.

Judy Darcy Secretary-Business Manager Hospital Employees' Union

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