



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWSLETTER

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Absence of leadership in federal budget

OTTAWA – “Stephen Harper has tabled an election-ready budget, but the new packaging of the Conservatives should not fool Canadians,” says Paul Moist, national president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

“Underneath these new promises is their true agenda: to weaken national social programs and diminish the role of public services in Canada. The government is abandoning its leadership role by having no conditions or federal accountability requirements linked to the additional transfers. This budget takes it one step further and encourages greater privatization of public services,” said Moist.

Canada’s municipalities are starved for cash and will not be receiving any relief unless they agree to a P3 scheme. The federal government is attempting to bribe provincial and municipal governments with a promise to top up infrastructure funding costs by 25 per cent - if the municipality or province ties the project to a P3. Essentially we are talking about public financing of private profit,” explained Moist.

“While we welcome the additional funding for education, federal transfers for post-secondary education would need to total \$4.28 billion to reach the same level that they were per person fifteen years ago in real dollar terms,” added Moist.

Federal transfers for early learning and child care were cut by \$1 billion when the government cancelled the national child care program. “There is no guarantee that the new funding will create child care spaces,” Moist said.

The budget is also cause for concern for public health care. “While the budget makes no mention of a national pharmacare program it provides over \$600 million for wait times guarantees. “There is no assurance that this money will go to fund publicly-delivered health care. The absence of that assurance concerns us,” said Moist.

“The federal budget adds up to a plan of short-term political opportunism, and lays out a road map for privatization of infrastructure. This is a government that is abandoning the leadership necessary to strengthen social programs,” concluded Moist.

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