

# news release

BC HEALTH COALITION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **No private hospitals in Canada's health care system – citizens' watchdog group to premiers**

*Abbotsford P3 hospital only one of many private health facilities being planned across the country, says BC Health Coalition*

As Canada's premiers meet in Vancouver with health care reform at the top of their "to do" list, concerned citizens' and other advocacy groups have a clear message for them – build public hospitals. Many provincial governments are endangering public health care by putting up new hospitals through public-private partnership (P3) arrangements with for-profit, multi-national consortium, says the B.C. Health Coalition, one of numerous community-based coalitions that are hosting more than 30 media events across the country today.

Between them, governments in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec are actively planning more than a dozen private hospitals – to be financed, designed, built and administered through public-private partnerships that are guaranteed windfalls for profit-driven corporations. New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador are flirting with similar plans and may soon follow suit.

"We want the premiers to steer away from public-private partnerships for hospitals. Public hospitals are the way to go. These private hospital deals, which involve billions of taxpayers' dollars paid to multi-national corporations over the life of the decades-long contracts, have to go," says Terrie Hendrickson, coordinator of BC Health Coalition.

"In these private hospitals, corporations take over key hospital services for 30 years or more, and make lucrative profits at the expense of patient care and quality. In Britain, the high costs of privatization have led to 30 per cent bed cuts and 26 per cent staff cuts. Basically, we pay more and get less."

B.C. Federation of Labour president Jim Sinclair says that the secrecy surrounding the P3 hospital deals the B.C. Liberals are making for a new facility in Abbotsford and a new ambulatory care centre at Vancouver Hospital should concern all British Columbians.

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“Gordon Campbell and his Liberals are desperate for a significant P3 project to get off the ground. They’ve even been warned by one of their key supporters – the Independent Contractors and Businesses Association of B.C. – that the Abbotsford private hospital needs to happen,” he says.

“You have to wonder, with only one bidder interested in the Abbotsford project, what is the government prepared to agree to in order to keep the P3 dream alive? Taxpayers won’t see what’s in the deals until after the multi-billion dollar contracts are signed, sealed and delivered,” says Sinclair.

“The citizens of the Fraser Valley are desperate for a new hospital. We are being held hostage by a government that says we can have one, but only if it’s private,” says Peter Thomson, spokesperson for the Fraser Health Coalition and Council of Canadians Langley Chapter.

“Universal, accessible health services rely on non-profit hospitals under community control. We need to push our politicians to resist the siren call of privatization or we will lose our public health system,” concludes Thomson. “P3 hospitals are a serious threat to the future of Medicare in this country and must be stopped.”

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