



News Release

THE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEBRUARY 17, 2004

Balanced budget comes at a high cost to health care

*Campbell Liberals will cut nearly \$100 million
from regional health care in 04/05*

There's been a heavy price paid by B.C. patients and health care workers for the Campbell Liberals' forecast balanced budget and a further \$98 million will be cut from the regional health sector which includes hospitals, community health services and long-term care in the upcoming year, says the Hospital Employees' Union.

"The finance minister's plan to increase health care funding looks good on paper but most of the forecast increase will happen after the next election," says HEU secretary-business manager Chris Allnutt. "But the cold hard facts about health care – the facts government won't tell you in their TV ads – is that they will cut nearly \$100 million in funding to regional health programs next year."

The cuts to the regional health sector, which includes acute and community health services, will occur despite the allocation of \$138 million in federal health accord funding.

"Those cuts will translate into bed cuts in hospitals and care homes, slashed services, longer surgery waits and the loss of thousands more skilled, experienced health care workers.

Next year's cuts will compound the damage the B.C. Liberals have already done to public health care including:

- nearly 3,000 long-term care beds closed or scheduled to be closed;
- more than 5,000 skilled and experienced workers fired to make way for privatization and another 2,000 lost to hospital and long-term care closures;
- wages for workers in critical health support roles slashed to the lowest rates in the country;
- surgery waiting lists have grown by more than 25 per cent since June, 2001; and
- hospitals have been closed or downgraded in communities across the province including Kaslo, Victoria, Summerland, Sparwood, New Westminster, Kimberley and Vancouver.

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