

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Public health care forum draws standing-room only crowd

Just hours after Health Minister George Abbott tabled controversial amendments to the *Medicare Protection Act* on April 8, more than 200 people attended a public talk by physicians and international policy experts about the dangers of continued health care privatization in B.C.

Dr. Michael Klein – physician, researcher and founding member of the Canadian Doctors for Medicare – reasserted that health care funding has remained stable as a percentage of both the B.C. and Canadian economies over the past decades.

“Health care spending is only increasing relative to the province’s budget because the government is cutting taxes and other services like education and social programs,” said Dr. Klein. “Appropriate investments, resourcing, and implementation of public innovations are the real answers to sustainable, universal health care.”

Dr. Wayne Hildahl, CEO of the Pan-Am Clinic in Winnipeg, told his own story about the successes of his formerly investor-owned clinic, once it was integrated into the local public health authority.

Dr. Hildahl, who continues as CEO of the clinic, told the crowd, “What we have accomplished at the Pan-Am Clinic proves that the efficiencies from a publicly accountable, multi-disciplinary, collaborative approach to health care are superior to the private-sector model.”

Dr. Allyson Pollock, Head of the Centre for International Public Health Policy at the University of Edinburgh, outlined the dangers of public-private partnerships (P3s), explaining, “P3s are very much a European export to countries like Canada, and are now being used to sell off all pieces of the public sector, including health care.

“P3s are placing assets that should belong to your children and grandchildren into the hands of corporations and big banks,” said Pollock.

Joyce Jones, BC Health Coalition community co-chair, said the event’s popularity is a clear sign that government continues to ignore the messages from their own Conversation on Health.

“British Columbians do not want more profit-driven health care,” said Jones. “They want government to put in place the many positive, public innovations that exist here in B.C. and across Canada that will strengthen health care for all.”

-30-

For more information, contact: Leslie Dickout, Medicare Campaigner, 604-787-6560.

**Supporting positive, public solutions to
make Medicare stronger in British Columbia!**

411 Dunsmuir Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 1X4