

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BCAA push for private insurance undermines medicare

BC Health Coalition calls on British Columbians to reject BCAA queue jumping insurance and demand government action to enforce health care legislation.

The BC Health Coalition is deeply disturbed by BCAA's recent announcement to begin offering insurance that will allow its members to jump the health care queue and obtain services at for-profit clinics.

The actions of BCAA clearly contravene both the Canada Health Act and BC's Medicare Protection Act, as it is illegal in British Columbia to sell private duplicate insurance for services already covered by MSP. "This is a clear violation of the law that protects equal access to health on equal terms and conditions, according to need and not to one's ability to pay," says BCHC co-chair Joyce Jones. "Allowing those who can afford to pay up to \$237 a month to get preferred access will only lengthen the queue for the rest of us," she says. "Like all private health insurance policies, it discriminates against people based on their age and health characteristics."

Evidence from Australia and the UK shows that private insurance does not take pressure off the public system and, in fact, erodes the fairness and efficiencies of quality public health care.

The BC Health Coalition urges BCAA members to contact the organization and demand an end to the trial program.

"British Columbians should send a clear message to both private insurers and the government that private insurance and for-profit clinics have no place in our health care system," says Jones.

"There is no shortage of proven public solutions to shorten wait times and strengthen health care for all. It's time this government listened to British Columbians' desire for a strong public health care system and acted to protect Medicare," she added.

For more information contact:

Joyce Jones, co-chair; BC Health Coalition: 604-987-0168 or 604-786-7530 (cell)

Melanie Leckovic, co-chair; BC Health Coalition: 604-785-2752 (cell)

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