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BC HEALTH COALITION

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BC Health Coalition urges Victoria to halt privatization during Conversation on Health

The BC Health Coalition is calling on the provincial government to suspend plans to privatize health services during the course of its year-long Conversation on Health.

Coalition spokesperson Leslie Dickout says a privatization moratorium would add substance to the B.C. health minister's claim that the consultation's outcomes aren't pre-determined.

"Participants in the Conversation on Health meetings in Kamloops this past weekend overwhelmingly spoke out for public health care and against privatization," says Dickout.

"But they were not convinced that Victoria was listening."

Dickout says there is a public perception that the government has already decided on its direction for health care and this concern is reinforced by two major privatization schemes that are in the works right now.

- Last week, health minister George Abbott confirmed that it is likely that a new outpatient clinic in Surrey would be built as public-private partnership. P3 contracts are typically 30 years or more in length.

Documents released last week by the BC Health Coalition revealed that the P3 model was not the first choice of senior Fraser Health Authority executives in charge of the project.

- Later this month, the Interior Health Authority will review private sector bids on a ten-year guaranteed contract for more than 17,000 surgical procedures in the Central Okanagan.

"Locking in privatization contracts for ten to 30 years flies in the face of government's commitment to listen to British Columbian's on health care," says Dickout.

"A moratorium on privatization would signal a commitment by government to a genuine debate about positive public solutions that will improve health care in our communities.

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