



Newsletter

HEU president and federal health minister discuss national health care issues

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION president Fred Muzin met with federal health minister Ujjal Dosanjh on March 1 in Vancouver to discuss the enforcement of the *Canada Health Act*, the ongoing privatization of health services and the need for national standards for community and continuing care.

Muzin emphasized the negative impact of contracting out on patient care and the vulnerability of our public health care system to free trade agreement provisions if privatization is unchecked.

"The contracting out of diagnostic and surgical procedures to private clinics is happening across the country," said Muzin. "The federal government needs to continuously enforce the Canada Health Act and penalize the provinces that permit violations.

"If the federal government fails to protect our public health care system, we could lose chunks of it to corporate interests under free trade agreements."

Muzin also talked about the needs of a growing seniors' population and lobbied for national standards in community and continuing care.

Health minister Ujjal Dosanjh acknowledged the importance of the issues Muzin raised and how federal and provincial governments must work together to address them.

When Muzin asked if political pressure could help bring about positive changes in health care, Dosanjh said yes.

"Political pressure does make a difference," said Muzin. "That's why HEU members will stay politically active and continue to press elected officials at all levels of government to protect and improve public health care."

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