



## Province restores funding for project that saves lives and controls drug costs

Today, the provincial government reinstated up to \$700,000 of an annual million dollar operating contract with the University of British Columbia's Therapeutics Initiative (TI).

“I want to congratulate Premier Christy Clark and Health Minister Terry Lake for restoring a majority of the province’s financial support for this valuable project – it is good news for both British Columbians and their health care system,” says HEU secretary-business manager Bonnie Pearson.

“The TI has proven to be a source of unbiased, evidence-based information for physicians that has arguably saved many lives and helped control B.C.’s PharmaCare program costs.”

According to health care experts, the TI has played a major role in containing health care costs for almost two decades. Compared to other provinces like Quebec and Ontario, B.C. has seen a much lower growth in the rate of drug costs, saving the province’s health care system hundreds of millions of dollars annually.

The previous provincial NDP government established the TI in 1994 to act as an independent project run by academics at the University of British Columbians to provide physicians and pharmacists with up-to-date, evidence-based, practical information on prescription drug therapy.

In addition to the restored funding, the province also reinstated TI’s free access to B.C. health data on drug use that it had suspended in 2012. This data tells B.C. researchers how drugs are used in our own province – a valuable tool for assessing costs and benefits of new and existing drug therapies.

The TI’s contract with the Ministry of Health was first reduced from one million dollars to \$550,000 in 2010, and then eliminated entirely last April by the government.

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