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**Nurses have solutions**

As key front-line health care providers, nurses and allied health care workers in BCNU have many solutions to improve public health care in BC.



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**Stronger Public Health Care**

We want stronger public health care, because we don't want to go back to the days before medicare – when families had to choose between putting food on the table, or going to the doctor to get care for an illness or injury.

We want stronger public health care, because medicare is the fairest, most efficient way of organizing health care, funded through a progressive taxation system, with access based on patients' medical needs not on their income.

We want stronger public health care, because we don't want any part of the American private, for-profit health care system, where millions of citizens have no health insurance at all, and most private insurance covers only part of the cost of care.



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**Saying "No" to user-pay schemes**

We don't want schemes that would force patients to pay for part or all of their care out of their own pockets, or force patients to get care from expensive private, for-profit facilities.



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**We can afford better public health care**

Contrary to what the government claims, we can afford better public health care in BC.

Contrary to what the government claims, there is no health care sustainability crisis.

Publicly available statistics show public health care spending in BC accounts for about the same percentage of our economy as 15 years ago. (6.8 per cent in 1991, 7.1 per cent in 2005).

While the government claims it is increasing the health care budget by 8 per cent a year, the figure is only an average of 5.5 per cent a year since 1995, and only about two per cent for the next three years. The government's claim that health care will consume 71 per cent of the budget by 2017 just doesn't add up. It's more likely to consume 40 per cent, about where it stands today. (Sources: *Canadian Institute for Health Information, Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives*).



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**Implement the Romanow Report**

We need improvements to make our public health care system more effective – improvements that were called for in the Roy Romanow report in 2002 but never implemented.



## Solutions for stronger public health care

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- Better first contact or primary health care – with multidisciplinary community health centres open 24/7;
- Better, more effective home care and home support to take the burden off hospitals;
- Better seniors care – with access to improved home care, home support and long term care nursing homes with the capability of treating seniors for certain illnesses on site;
- Better co-ordination of surgery wait lists, full use of capacity in public ORs;
- Better mental health services with outreach teams to help clients stay in their communities or seek residential care when needed;
- A national pharmacare program to provide equal access to prescription drugs across the country and control drug costs through bulk-buying;
- Recruiting and retaining nurses and other staff needed by our growing population and ensuring they can provide care in a safe and healthy work environment.

Canadians decided more than 40 years ago that health care is too fundamental to the well-being of our citizens to be left to the whims of the marketplace, to be bought and sold like luxury cars and big screen TVs.

The so-called “mixed” public/private health care systems of Europe have their own problems that the government ignored in its superficial “fact-finding tour”.



## Concern about government bias in Conversation on Health

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We are concerned that by providing biased materials and misleading statistics, the government appears to be pursuing its own agenda through this Conversation.

We’re concerned the government has set up the Conversation to justify changes to download more costs onto patients and bring in more private, for-profit health care. We can’t understand why the government is segregating the voices of health care providers to separate forums in the Conversation on Health.

We’re concerned the emphasis on “sustainability” is code for more service cuts, by a government that forced health authorities to cut 1200 acute care beds and almost 4,000 long term care beds in its first three years in office.

We’re concerned that polling shows the public believes the government has already made up its mind.



## Nurses participating in good faith

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Nevertheless, nurses are participating in good faith in the Conversation on Health. As front-line health care providers who care for patients 24-7 365 days a year we have an obligation to make sure our voices are heard. We offer our solutions in the hope the government listens to our suggestions and acts on them.

For more information on BCNU’s solutions for stronger public health, go to our website at [www.bcnu.org](http://www.bcnu.org). Click on Campaigns/Issues/Save Medicare.