

NEWS RELEASE



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Nurses concerned premier's "Conversation on health" foreshadows push for more user pay in BC

The President of the BC Nurses' Union is concerned the provincial government's drive to entrench "sustainability" into BC's health care laws is simply a code for more user pay health care.

Debra McPherson says, "The premier seems determined to focus his conversation with British Columbians simply on the costs of public health care. There's not a sense that this will be a balanced discussion. It's ironic that the premier today says he wants to listen to the people of BC, while just yesterday North Island residents who called for improved local services were virtually ignored by the government health authority (VIHA).

"When Premier Campbell says he wants to add the principle of 'sustainability' to medicare, it's really a code for more user fees, more private insurance schemes and more people paying directly out of their pockets.

"It's not acceptable that he would simply ignore the reams of reports and recommendations from Romanow, nurses and others which prove that public health care, when funded sufficiently and focused on real innovation is cost effective and efficient. We've been calling for Community Health Centres, nurse-led primary health initiatives and greater community support for seniors for years now. Let's get on with improving our public health care system." McPherson says.

"The premier also paints a grim picture of the future based on his economic opinion, which doesn't reflect the reality that British Columbians are still only paying less than 10% of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) for a health care system that doesn't discriminate between the rich and the poor."

McPherson believes the time, money and resources that the government is spending on this exercise would be better spent on improving health care.

British Columbia Nurses' Union

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