

PRIVATE FOR-PROFIT CLINICS, public **EXPENSE**

Under the Medical Services Plan (MSP), British Columbians get medically necessary doctor and hospital services based on need, not the ability to pay. By law, the government must fund access to these services on a not-for-profit basis.

In contrast, the goal of the increasing number of private for-profit clinics in B.C. today is to make as much money as possible for their owners and shareholders. Some do so by providing health care services on a for-profit basis to patients who can pay.

Some clinics also charge patients user fees and/or “double-bill” patients for services while also billing MSP for the same services. Extra billing and user fees violate the Canada Health Act yet the B.C. government has ignored these practices for years.

Profit is also made at the public’s expense. Many private clinics get public money from Health Authorities for surgical and diagnostic services covered under the public plan. Private clinics charge more for these services than they cost in the public system.



PRIVATE FOR-PROFIT CLINICS, public **THREAT**

In 2012, the B.C. government released an audit of Vancouver’s Cambie Surgery Centre and the Specialist Referral Clinic that showed these private clinics had unlawfully billed patients nearly \$500,000 in less than 30 days.

This audit came three years after Dr. Brian Day, owner of the two clinics, launched a lawsuit against the provincial government. Dr. Day wants to strike down the law that prohibits extra billing and user fees, claiming these rules violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Dr. Day’s constitutional challenge threatens all Canadians. It is a direct attack on our universal public health care system and its core principle that care is provided on the basis of need, not the ability to pay. If successful, the case could pave the way for a U.S.-style two-tiered system across Canada.

PRIVATE FOR-PROFIT CLINICS, public **PROBLEMS**

Private clinics increase wait times. Private clinics take money and doctors out of the public system. Studies show this leads to longer wait times in the public system.

Private clinics cost more. To make a profit, many private clinics charge more for the same test or surgery than the public system.

Private clinics create inequality. Private clinics provide care only to those who can pay. This creates a two-tier system where people with money can get access to services before others who may need them more.

Private clinics reduce safety. Private clinics increase profits by cutting corners, which reduces the quality of care. Research shows private clinics have higher death rates and poorer outcomes than the public system.

Private clinics “cherry pick” patients. Private clinics maximize profit by choosing patients less likely to have complications. Patients with more complex problems stay in the public system, driving up the average cost of care. And when patients have complications from treatment at private clinics, they return to the public system for care at public expense.



PRIVATE NUMBERS

19%

The increase in cost each year to Canadians if Canada moved to a for-profit hospital system. This amounts to \$15.3 billion.

\$21,780

The cost of hip replacement surgery at a for-profit clinic in Alberta. The same surgery in a public hospital costs \$10,000.

250%

The increase in the cost of an hour of operating room time in a private clinic over the last 10 years.

0

The improvement in wait time for cancer care a year after Ontario's Sunnybrook Hospital opened a private cancer treatment centre at a cost of \$4 million to taxpayers. The centre was eventually closed.

2,200

The number of deaths that would occur every year if Canada switched to privately owned for-profit hospitals, according to the Canadian Health Coalition.



public **ACTION**

Private, for-profit care is less fair, more costly and poses a greater risk to patients than public health care. Take action for public health care.

Write to your MLA:

- Demand the B.C. government fully audit private clinics and stop violations of our health care laws.
- Demand the province take a strong stand in defending provincial health legislation from the legal challenge launched by for-profit clinics.

Get more information and share it with your friends:

- canadians.org/healthcare
- healthcoalition.ca

Two groups are defending public health care by intervening in the case. You can learn more about them here:

- bchealthcoalition.ca
- canadiandoctorsformedicare.ca



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PRIVATE FOR-PROFIT CLINICS ARE BAD FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

Across B.C., there are private for-profit clinics providing health care only to those who can afford to pay.

Some private, for-profit clinics bill their patients in ways that openly violate Canada's universal health care laws. Two private clinics are challenging those laws in court.

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

FAIRNESS. SAFETY. COST.

YOUR PUBLIC HEALTH CARE.