

Campaigns

Defending Medicare in Court The For-Profit Clinics' Legal Attack



Since 2009, we have been closely involved with the constitutional challenge launched by Dr. Brian Day, owner of the for-profit Cambie Surgery Centre, a Vancouver-based clinic known for unlawfully billing patients and public funds. **The case is going to court in September of 2014.** This challenge

aims to end public health care in Canada by striking down provincial health legislation that limits the for-profit delivery of medically necessary services, claiming that these rules violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This case puts the fundamental principle of public health care - that care be provided based on need, not ability to pay - on trial.

Parties in the case are calling this one of the most significant constitutional challenges in Canadian history. The case is likely to proceed to the Supreme Court of Canada and the defining Charter interpretation would apply across the country - that's why **it's important to everyone in Canada.**

The BC Health Coalition and Canadian Doctors for Medicare are interveners in the case. This means that we are able to fight for Medicare in court by participating directly in the litigation. Our intervener group has secured a strong legal team including leading constitutional and health litigators Steven Shrybman and Joe Arvay. **This year we won an important victory when the judge granted our application to have key experts give evidence in the case about both the Chaoulli case in Quebec and the US health care system.**

As you know, **Canada's universal public health care system provides a multitude of advantages to individuals, employers and the economy as a whole.** People in Canada are able to access care based on need, not income. Employers bear only a fraction of health insurance costs for employees, and our overall system has very low administration costs.

Are there challenges that need to be addressed within our public system? Absolutely. But we need improvements to our system that benefit everyone - there are evidence-based public solutions that are efficient and do not compromise our values of fairness and good care for all, regardless of income. Evidence shows that the two-tier system that the clinics are seeking through this case would only benefit the wealthy elite and large medical and insurance companies, while the services the rest of us rely on would suffer.



Health Accord

This year, the BCHC joined allies across BC and Canada to push for a renewed Canada Health Accord. Many of our members across the province joined over 40 other organizations in the National Day of Action - the day the Accord expired. This year we'll continue to put pressure on the federal government to reverse planned health care cuts and return to the negotiating table with the provinces and territories to build a new health accord.



Check Up!



The BCHC is excited to continue offering innovative and unique youth-led education on the Canadian health care system across BC, along with our member organization Check Your Head.

In addition to offering the "Health Care: The Price is Right?" workshop across the province, CYH has been engaging youth in the health care system in other ways over the last year. One key consideration has

been an increasing emphasis on reaching diverse youth in a variety of communities and settings beyond the classroom. This has included neighbourhood houses, work skills training programs, northern and remote classrooms, ESL courses, and health centres. Being able to include these diverse voices has yielded important insights and inspiring dialogues.

This year, six youth volunteers have been selected to be trained as social media content creators who will be blogging, Facebooking, and tweeting youth-friendly content related to the upcoming health care court case.

It is critically important to engage youth in the health care system and to hear their voices - they have the most to lose in terms of what the health care system will look like in the future.

Inside BCHC

This year, we bid a sad farewell to BCHC Labour Co-chair Rachel Tutte. Rachel served as HSA rep on the Steering Committee for many years, and has been Co-chair for the last 4 years. She served BCHC tirelessly and wisely. Her experience, dedication and passion as an advocate for an accessible, equitable public health care system will be sorely missed, though we know she will continue to serve our cause in many other ways. She has earned a well-deserved break, and we wish her all the best.



We would also like to express our very sincere thanks to past Steering Committee members Ava Waxman and Margi Blamey. Both women recently retired from their respective organizations: Council of Canadians and the HEU Communications Department. We owe both of these women a tremendous amount of gratitude for the amount of time and energy they have each put into the BCHC over the years.

We are also extremely grateful to Adam Lynes-Ford, BCHC Campaigner, for his dedicated work throughout this year of change and tremendous demands; especially in our efforts to mount a significant force in the private clinics case legal fight and campaign. He has been our amazing multi-talented rock through everything.

In the fall we, sadly, had to accept the resignation of staff member Tracey Hurtado. Tracey worked very hard on behalf of the BCHC, and we wish her all the best with her current and future endeavors.

And, we are thrilled to welcome Terrie Hendrickson as the new BCHC Coordinator. We feel we are very lucky to have found Terrie and hope all BCHC members will welcome Terrie to the team!

The Year Ahead...

The main focus of our efforts this year will be the BC Supreme Court clinics' case. We have a huge job ahead of us - not only will we be participating in the trial, we will also continue to work with our allies to raise awareness about the stakes in the case across the country and build an even stronger call for positive, public improvements to Medicare.

This case is perhaps the biggest challenge to Medicare in our generation. It's not going to be easy, but we know that together we can be successful. Thank you for your past support and we look forward to working together in the year ahead.

Sincerely, Your BCHC Co-Chairs:

Rachel Tutte

Rick Turner

Positive. Public.
BC's Voice for Medicare



Supporting positive, public solutions to make
Medicare stronger in British Columbia.



We have seen many changes since our last AGM - new members joining our coalition, new alliances being formed, existing networks developed and improved and a more intense effort at supporting and improving public health care and fighting those who would undermine or severely weaken it.

We took on the task of trying to recruit at least one large private sector union to increase the reach of the BCHC message and materials, and to highlight the importance of public health care for private sector workers

and employers - and Unifor answered the call!

We are very pleased to welcome our newest Steering Committee members, Susan Spratt from Unifor and Kaitlin Pelletier from Check Your Head!!

Our thanks to you, and to every organization and individual, for working with us to strengthen our public health care system.

Member Organizations

411 Seniors Centre Society
BC Federation of Labour
BC Federation of Retired Union Members
BC Government and Services Employees Union
BC Government Retired Employees Association - Langley/Surrey Branch
BCYT-Building & Construction Trades Council
CUPE-BC
Castlegar & District Health Watch
Check Your Head
Confederation of Canadian Unions
COSCO
Council of Canadians – BC/Yukon
Council of Canadians - Campbell River
Council of Canadians – Comox Valley
Council of Canadians - Surrey, Langley and White Rock
Council of Canadians - Vancouver/Burnaby
East Kootenay District Labour Council
East Kootenay Railway Pensioners' Association
Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC
Fraser Valley Labour Council

Health Sciences Association
Hospital Employees Union
HEU - 100 Mile House Local
HEU - Kamloops Thompson Local
HEU – Kaslo Local
HEU - Richmond Lions Manor Local
HEU - St Vincent's Hospital Local
HEU - Tofino Local
Kamloops Health Coalition
Jewish Seniors Alliance of Greater Vancouver
Nelson and Area Society for Health/Save Our Services
New Westminster & District Labour Council
North Okanagan Labour Council
Occupational First Aid Attendants Association of BC
Positive Living Society of BC
Qmunity
REACH Centre Association
Retired Teachers' Association of BC – Kamloops
Save Our Northern Seniors
Seniors on Guard for Medicare
South Island Health Coalition
TSSU
Thompson Rivers University Students' Union
Unifor

Steering Committee

Summer Crosson, **BC Federation of Labour**
Anita Zaenker, **BC Government and Social Services Union**
Kaitlin Pelletier, **Check Your Head**
Kathleen Jamieson, **COSCO**
Margaret Coutts, **Council of Canadians**
Kathryn Sutton, **CUPE BC**
Rachel Tutte, **Health Sciences Association**
Chris Kincaid, **Hospital Employees Union**
Rick Turner, **Kamloops Health Coalition**
Claudette Cardinal, **Positive Living Society of BC**
Pat Savage, **South Island Health Coalition**
Susan Spratt, **Unifor**



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Strengthening public health care
for all British Columbians