

Long-Term Care Investment Claims Questioned

Saskatoon – According to a recent media report, our Saskatchewan Minister of Health, the Honourable Jim Reiter is claiming that the SaskParty government has increased funding to Long-Term Care (LTC) by over 40%.

“We’re wondering where the government came up with this number as it cannot be verified in any publicly accessible reports; and if this number is accurate, where did that ‘over 40%’ get invested? Because we are confident it was not used to hire additional front line staff,” said Barbara Cape, President of SEIU-West.

According to the family member featured in the story, her father had to wait eight months to be admitted into his LTC facility but the media has reported that Minister Reiter identified the average wait to get into a facility is 24 days in Saskatchewan.

“Long-Term Care is about direct, hands-on, one-on-one, personal care,” adds Cape. “Families need to know that there are enough people working in the facility to provide that care and to ensure that their loved one is engaged, and happy in their home. Our provincial government is responsible for ensuring that funding is there for front line care.”

Over the past several years, the government has been ‘tinkering’ with our public health care services in the name of efficiency. The combination of wasteful spending on LEAN consultants, and costly initiatives such as the privatization of certain services and P3s together with continued funding shortfalls; all these factors have directly impacted the level of care that is able to be provided in the public system.

“The SaskParty agenda of starving the public system of funding while privatization by stealth is hurting residents, patients, and clients trying to access health care services in the province,” stated Cape. “I’m proud of the families that are coming forward to demand better of their provincial government. SEIU-West members join with them in to say it’s our health care system and we deserve better.”

The Saskatchewan government has touted that the recent move to one health authority will save money. “If the many changes do lend to savings then we need transparency on that accounting and those funds need to be reinvested into our public health care system,” added Cape. “Rather than focusing on the top level management positions, they should be adding capacity to the front line services in health care.”

SEIU-West represents more than 13,000 working people in the province of Saskatchewan. They include members who work in health care, education, municipalities, community-based organizations, retirement homes and other sectors. They are joined by one colour – purple – and one union – SEIU-West. Purple works in our communities! Visit www.PurpleWorks.ca to find out more about the members of SEIU-West.

- 30 -

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