

BULLETIN

Stop user-pay emergency room from opening, BC Health Coalition tells government

November 28, 2006

Health minister hesitates while private surgical clinic moves to expand profit-making enterprise

The BC Health Coalition is calling on the provincial government to immediately stop plans by the private, for-profit False Creek Surgical Centre to open Canada's first user-pay emergency room in Vancouver on Monday.

"The False Creek Surgical Centre's latest entrepreneurial venture ... an emergency room ... appears to involve charging fees for medically-necessary treatments and procedures," says health coalition co-chair Joyce Jones.

"If that's the case, it's a blatant violation of the Canada Health Act (CHA) and the provincial government must put a stop to it before it starts."

Jones says that judging from his comments earlier today, BC health minister George Abbott doesn't truly grasp the severity of this development and sounds as though he's prepared to allow more U.S.-style health care into B.C.

"British Columbians' considerable skepticism about Premier Campbell's conversation on health will only increase if the False Creek Surgical Centre is allowed to run a for-profit emergency room," adds Jones.

"It's unconscionable to let the ability to pay dictate who's entitled to receive health care services and who is not. This is not what British Columbians believe in and it's not what they want."

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For more information contact:

Joyce Jones, BC Health Coalition co-chair, 604 786 7530 (cell)

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