

# news

# release

BC HEALTH COALITION

For immediate release  
September 14, 2004

## **Stop health care privatization now, says BC Health Coalition**

The BC Health Coalition joined other medicare advocacy groups from across Canada today to send a clear message to the nation's first ministers: *We need to fix health care, not privatize it.*

The Coalition says that after a decade of studies and commissions, Canadians are demanding that their governments act together to provide stable health care funding and urgently required national pharmacare and home care programs.

But Coalition co-chair Alice Edge also urged the Prime Minister to stand behind his government's pledge to "stem the tide of privatization."

"Our provincial government is clearly testing Mr. Martin's resolve by its recent expansion of the use of privately-operated clinics to deliver public health care services," says Edge, "even though studies show that further privatization will lead to added costs, less accountability, poorer quality service and even longer waits for patients.

Edge says wait lists and waiting times have grown in Canada as private health care expands. And in B.C., more people are paying for services that were previously covered under public insurance.

"The national accountability framework being touted by the Prime Minister Martin sounds good in theory, what will it mean in practice?" says Edge. "Without strong national standards and accountability, additional health dollars may be padding profit margins for investors in private clinics and P3 hospitals."

Edge was joined by community, seniors', healthcare workers' and labour representatives today in Vancouver to provide comment to the media on the First Ministers' health talks which are underway in Ottawa.

-30-

For more information, or to interview press conference participants contact:  
Lesley Moore, BC Health Coalition coordinator 604-681-7945 or 778-885-1399