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## **B.C. Budget leaves province unprepared for looming federal health care cuts**

Victoria — The BC Health Coalition says that the 2015 budget fails to plan for the looming federal health care cuts and lacks the leadership needed to care for the province’s aging population.

“B.C. is facing a 5 billion dollar cut to health care under the federal government’s new funding formula and this budget leaves us unprepared,” says BC Health Coalition co-chair Rick Turner of today’s budget.

The federal government has said that it will not renew the 2004 Health Accord, and the new funding formula for federal health transfer payments will mean that B.C. will collect less federal funding than the province has received over the past 10 years.

Starting in 2017-18, the Canada Health Transfer payments will no longer include a 6% escalator and will begin to grow in line with a 3-year moving average of nominal GDP growth (with a minimum increase of 3 per cent per year guaranteed). That means B.C. needs to invest in public care programs that reduce costs in the long term in order to cope with the cuts.

“Without leadership from the federal government, and in the face of deep cuts, it’s up to the province to lead the way to scale up successful programs within the public system,” says Turner. “We want to see that B.C. is serious about reducing costs by investing in home and community care services that help keep people out of expensive hospital beds.”

Turner notes that the long-term savings and health benefits realized from these programs compared to housing seniors in hospitals and residential care would improve efficiencies and deliver the services needed in a more timely manner.

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