

news release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

B.C. Budget shortsighted on seniors' care, sustainability

Victoria — The BC Health Coalition says that the 2013 budget does not take the necessary steps toward improving seniors' care nor ensuring the long term sustainability of the public health care system.

"B.C. needs a system that is there to care for our aging population, yet there is little evidence in this budget to suggest our government intends to take serious action on seniors' care," said BC Health Coalition co-chair Rick Turner of today's budget, which projects a reduction in real health care spending.

Today's budget comes one year after the release of the Provincial Ombudsperson's report on the state of seniors' care in B.C., and since then the Ministry of Health has fully implemented only four of the 141 recommendations made directly to the ministry.

"The Ombudsperson's report clearly revealed that strengthening home and community care services will greatly improve the lives of seniors," said Turner. "Furthermore, investment in home and community care services reduces pressure on the more expensive primary and acute care parts of the health care system. The government's current shortsighted approach will not address current challenges such as crowded emergency rooms and hospital beds.

Speaking to the government's focus on "balanced budgets" Turner noted that the majority of the health care budget is spent on costly acute hospital care – by far the most expensive part of the system.

"The Ombudsperson's findings indicate that the Ministry of Health has, in many cases, failed to fulfill its leadership role for seniors' care in our province," said Turner. "By failing to act on seniors' care, the government is failing seniors and missing an important opportunity to reduce overall health care costs."

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