



September 10, 2020
For Immediate Release

Attn: Assignment Editor

Victory for Patients Over Private Clinics in B.C. Court Challenge: Historic Victory Against Profit-Driven Health Care

Toronto – A ten-year legal attack launched by one of the largest private for-profit surgical centres in Canada seeking to strike down key protections for single-tier health care has reached a critical juncture. Today a B.C. Court ruled on the case upholding the provisions in British Columbia law that protect our system of public health care without extra user fees for patients.

The landmark ruling by Justice Steeves dealt a strong blow to the efforts of Dr. Brian Day and others advocating for-profit privatization of health care to undermine Canada’s publicly-funded health care system. This decision ensures that access to health care will continue to be based on need and not on wealth. It has implications for the whole country and the Ontario Health Coalition has been following the case closely.

Canada’s public health care system is based on foundational principles of equity and compassion that underlie the principles of the Canada Health Act and provincial legislation that is built upon it. The recent public health emergency caused by COVID-19 has underscored just how important our public health care system is. This decision protects our ability to endure crises without financial ruin and to care for one other into the future.

The B.C. Health Coalition and Canadian Doctors for Medicare were Intervenors in the court challenge. This is what they said:

“This is a historic victory against profit-driven health care in Canada,” said Dr. Danyaal Raza, Chair of Canadian Doctors for Medicare. “We know that single-payer publicly-funded health care is the fairest way to pay for health care, rather than forcing patients to pay out-of-pocket or buy private insurance. This case was never about wait times - it was always about profit.”

The sections of BC law that the private clinic operators sought to strike down are in place to preserve a public health care system for in which access to necessary medical care is based on need and not an individual's ability to pay. This case has always been about increasing profits for doctors and investor-owned health care facilities.

“As a group of patients, doctors and health care advocates, we became involved in this case in order to defend and protect public health care,” said Edith MacHattie, co-chair of the BC Health Coalition. “This is a victory for everyone who uses health care in Canada. Even though the attack had been launched in BC, it took aim at the very heart of the Canada Health Act and every provincial health care insurance plan.”