

**Standing Committee on Health
Speaking Notes for Caryn Duncan
November 8, 2001**

Minister of Health – Colin Hansen – comments in VanSun;

- people are disillusioned with politicians; women I serve!
- Election promises – not to cut health and education spending
- “we have to start cutting away the programs that may be beneficial but of marginal benefit”
- “challenge the marginal programs that are of marginal benefit”
- “lid on spending” vs spending freeze vs cuts to health care
- “\$9.5 billion health care budget frozen till 2004-2005

BCHC & VVHC

- Public, not for-profit, health care
- Federal funding of health care must be restored
- Provincial cuts to health care are not an acceptable course of action to counter ongoing federal underfunding
- Provincial commitment to health care including meeting increased demands for health care by British Columbians because of population growth, an aging population, and inflation
- Women are shouldering a disproportionate share of the burden of cuts to health care – i.e. charging or increasing user fees for services – because they are more likely to live in poverty, to work at insecure jobs, have poorly paid jobs, to work part-time, and often have no benefits

Income gap

- Women's median, after tax incomes are still less than two-thirds of men's
- women earn 61 cents for every dollar a man earns (median after tax income)
- one in five women lives in what Stats Can defines as a low income situation
- 56% of lone-parent mothers had incomes below SC's low-income cut-off
- 50% women with disabilities live in poverty
- 24% senior women live in what SC describes as a low-income situation

BC Health Care Cuts

- de-listing drugs under the Pharmacare program
- de-listing services such eliminating routine eye examinations under MSP (315,000 exams last year for people aged 19-64, eye exam costs up to \$85)
- affects on women...
- what is to come?
 - private hospitals
 - cuts to community-based care
 - home support reduced
- Good jobs in the health care sector – HEU 46,000 members at 400 facilities % are women
- Affects on women...

MESSAGES

- Expand consultation i.e. Pharmacare, MSP coverage, privatization
- Slow down the process
- Gender analysis of proposed health care reforms
- Commitment to the Canada Health Act, 1984
- Health fundamental right of all Canadians
- Health care, social program, taxes, for all, paid by all