

**Speaking Notes for C. Duncan  
Vancouver Sun Editorial Board Meeting  
March 12, 2002**

---

**WHO WE ARE (BCHC)**

Broad based coalition...

- Seniors – Old Age Pensioners' Org, COSCO, Seniors Network of BC
- Students and Youth – CFS, Check Your Head
- Community Groups – BCPWA, YouthCo, BC Forum, COC, ELP, VWHC
- Community Health Centre – Reach Clinic
- Hospital workers, health care workers, nurses, and government employees
  - Unions – HEU , BCNU, BCGEU, HSA

## CUTS TO HEALTH CARE IN BC

- 2001 election campaign
- Liberals promised they would not cut health or education spending

### IN REALITY:

- 28,000 health care jobs will be cut in the next year (as revealed in a secret budget document released to the media March 4<sup>th</sup>)
- 85% of those jobs are held by women
- the three year funding freeze imposed by the government on health care will result in (because of inflation, aging pop, pop growth)
- \$1.5 billion in service cuts to front-line health care
- This translates into:
  - hospital closures, emergency room closures, growing waiting lists, reduced community health services i.e. Patient's Rights workshop,
- AND off-loading costs on to users...
- MSP premiums will increase by 50% May 1<sup>st</sup> (Alberta & BC)

- MSP no longer covers
  - Physiotherapy
  - Chiro
  - massage therapy
  - naturopath
  - podiatry
- We must now pay 100% of the cost of these services
- Those on MSP premium assistance are now allowed only 10 visits in total per year for all these health services
- Everyone between 19 and 64 must now pay for 100% of the cost of eye examinations
- Pharmacare - Our provincial drug plan – is under attack
- 17 drugs have been cut from Pharmacare
- Pharmacare deductibles have increased by \$200 for everyone
- By January 2003, eligibility for Pharmacare benefits will be income-based – about 420,000 seniors will pay even more for their drugs

- On budget day the provincial government increased the provincial sales tax by .05% to raise money to pay for the increase in doctors' fees
- The VWHC will lose 100% of its provincial government funding in 2004. That gives us 2 years to figure out how to meet the needs of the thousands of women who visit our health information resource centre each year looking for important health info!
- The government claims it's putting PATIENTS first!
- If the government was putting patients first it would be getting drug costs under control, putting doctors on salary, and putting social programs ahead of tax cuts!!!