

Medical Services Plan Premiums

Whereas the BC Liberal government took office in 2001 and since that time have hit families with a shocking and relentless series of increases in regressive taxes; and

Whereas one of the worst examples is Medical Services Plan (MSP) premiums which have almost doubled to \$69.25 a month for a single to \$125.50 for a couple. People now pay as much in MSP premiums as large BC corporations pay in income tax. Although we're paying much more, we get less. Paramedical coverage - chiropractic, naturopathy, massage therapy, non-surgical podiatry and physiotherapy - was eliminated entirely, plus the government cut Pharmacare coverage; and

Whereas the current system is unfair. MSP premiums are a tax that bears no relationship to ability to pay, a billionaire pays the same as a young man or woman who earns just \$30,000, for that reason inequality grows deeper every time the government increases MSP premiums - and this is on top of the government's \$2.4 billion a year tax giveaways that benefits corporations and the rich; and

Whereas the current system wastes public dollars. In addition to increasing premiums, the B.C. Liberals privatized the Medical Services Plan (MSP). Instead of going into health care, \$324 million of our money is going into profits for Maximus Incorporated, a US multinational, over a 10 year period. The big banks and credit card companies also take a share when individuals pay their bills on-line; and

Whereas fair, progressive taxes are a much more efficient way of paying for health care and every penny raised can go into providing quality care rather than boosting private profits;

Therefore be it resolved that the B.C. Federation of Retired Union Members (BC Forum) demand the provincial government eliminate Medical Services Plan premiums - a regressive tax that exists in virtually no other province - and fund quality public health care services from general revenues raised by fair, progressive taxes.