April 5, 2018 |

Releases

NDP government ban on extra billing will protect patients, force private clinics to follow the law

Vancouver - The BC Federation of Labour welcomes strong provincial government action to protect patients from user fees charged by private clinics by putting into force parts of a law first adopted by the BC Liberals more than 15 years ago.

“Loopholes and long surgical waitlists created by the BC Liberals allowed private health operators to extra bill patients at will, “ says BCFED President Irene Lanzinger. “We salute the government for no longer turning a blind eye to the issue and making private clinics operate within the law.

The move comes after the federal government fined BC $16 million for violating the ban on extra billing. The penalty was levied after audits of private clinics showed a widespread and rampant user fee problem in BC.

The ban on extra billing comes after health minister Adrian Dix expanded funding for high profile surgical procedures like hips and knees, and increased the number of MRIs by 37,000 a year.

The BC Health Coalition applauded the government’s move to put an end to BC’s status as the “Wild West” of private billing. It will help build a faster, more efficient care public system, with fewer patients facing unaffordable private fees, the coalition says.