

PLANNED CUTS TO HEALTH CARE PROOF OF LIBERAL FISCAL MISMANAGEMENT

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Vernon – A devastating report leaked by the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority revealing plans for massive cuts to operating rooms and further delays for surgeries, shows the BC Liberals have seriously mismanaged the BC economy, says BC Conservative President, Wayne McGrath.

“The Liberals had promised to be responsible fiscal managers who would rescue health care in BC from the previous NDP government mismanagement. Now, the whole system is about to explode with these cut backs,” said McGrath.

McGrath pointed out that the Liberals have done the exact opposite of what prudent governments usually do by cutting taxes and massively increasing capital spending during boom times, and now raising taxes with the HST and cutting spending during an economic slowdown.

“He’s got it completely backwards. Just as the economy is trying to recover, the Liberals have run out of money, and now must cut back on health services and raise taxes. It is going to prolong, and may even kill BC’s chances of recovery for a long time. The Campbell government has totally screwed up its priorities, and now British Columbians will pay the price.”

The planned health cuts include:

- Closing 13.5 operating rooms from September to March 2010.
- Postponing 5,800 surgeries in areas such as neurosurgery, vascular surgery, ortho trauma, ophthalmology and general surgery.
- Reducing operating-room and hospital-ward staff by an estimated 112 full-time-equivalent jobs.
- Cutting 13 anesthesiology positions.

“This leaked report may be just the tip of the iceberg,” said McGrath. “These cuts represent only one region of the province. Clearly, this indicates that there must be plans for further cuts across the board in all regions.”

“I shudder to think of what is in store for people once the Olympic costs and overages are actually revealed. Whatever recovery we may have had by then may be totally extinguished. It is reckless spending on behalf of friends and insiders, with heart patients and sick people paying the price,” concluded McGrath.

McGrath said that the BC Conservative Party would overhaul the health care system by instituting a ‘per patient’ funding formula that would change patients from a liability to an asset when receiving health care. Such a system would increase accountability, improve service and reduce costs and surgery wait times.

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