

BOGUS! Allowing the rich to buy special treatment is not right, and it's certainly not smart.

It's not right because it goes against the whole idea of a democratic society. If we let the rich "jump the cue" and buy better health care what's next?

Do we let the rich pay for private courts too? Quicker 911 response and fire and police protection? Better schools? Do we finally let the rich pay to get quicker, "Gold Card" service with everything government does?

It's not as if the rich don't already have a big advantage over the rest of us. Just being rich is good for your health.

Your chances of "catching something" because of where and how you live are greatly reduced. So is the risk of "ruining your health" because of where and how you work.

It's only right that the rich should take their chances, like the rest of us.

It's also smart.

The fact is letting the rich buy better and quicker care will only lead to reduced and slower care for the rest of us.

Doctors, and all health care workers, are the same as all of us: they tend to work where they get paid the most. That will never be in a public system. So private care clinics will flourish and draw off health care workers—usually the best.

In the end, there'll be fewer good people to take care of us in the public system. Waiting time will increase. Level of care will decrease.

The health care system will be stronger given a choice between public and private delivery of treatment.

BOGUS! Choice is great at an all-you-can-eat buffet—it's not so great when it comes to how you pay for medical care.

Choosing to buy services from a private supplier is choosing to pay more for less.

Private suppliers are in business to make a profit—period! They can't do that by giving us a full dollar's worth of service for every dollar we pay them. They always take something out for themselves. We always wind up with less. This is too high a price to pay just so we can say we have a choice.

There is, of course a legitimate and true choice. The choice of spending more in the public sector.



Our provincial governments could, for example, easily choose to reopen some of the thousands of public hospital beds they have closed over the past few years.

Legalising private clinics in Alberta will not give American medical services corporations a way into Canada.

BOGUS! American medical services corporations are like a 900 pound Gorilla. Once we open the door to them—even a crack—they'll muscle their way right in. And the law is on their side.

It's all set out in black and white in the North American Free Trade Agreement: Whatever we let Canadian businesses do in Canada, we've got to let foreign businesses do in Canada.

The new law in Alberta allows Canadian companies to sell private, for-profit health care services there. So, it can only be a matter of time until American health care giants will demand to be allowed to do the same.

Once these huge foreign corporations have established themselves in Alberta, they are bound to move into other provinces.

Medicare will be lost.

EXPOSED

3 BIG FAT LIES

ABOUT CANADA'S **MEDICARE**

- X LIE 1 We can't afford it.**
- X LIE 2 Going private will lower costs.**
- X LIE 3 Going private will shorten lines.**

DEBUNKED

4 OTHER TOTALLY PHONEY MEDICARE 'FACTS'



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BIG FAT LIE

We can't afford to spend on Medicare, the way we used to.

THE TRUTH IS WE CAN EASILY AFFORD TO SPEND WHAT IT WOULD TAKE TO RESTORE FULL-FUNDING TO MEDICARE—AND MORE.

We have a “budget surplus” right now—with more to come . So, there's plenty of money.

Plus, our Medicare is a world beater. Not only is it the most cost-efficient among public plans; study after study shows our Medicare is more fair and more effective than any private health care system anywhere.

Medicare gives us great value for our money.

It's the last place we should look to cut.

Better than the States. Before Medicare, Canada and the United States spent an equivalent amount of money on health care. Today, CANADA SPENDS ABOUT 36% LESS than the United States and gets a whole lot more for it.

Individual Americans now spend an average of \$3,701 (US) a year for a health care system where 43 million people have no health care coverage and another 50 million have inadequate coverage.

In Canada today, we spend about \$2,050 (US) per person per year for a health care system in which each and every one of us is covered.

THE TRUTH IS what we need more than money is governments willing to do the right thing and choose to use the money we already have to restore and expand Medicare right now.

BIG FAT LIE

Going private will lower costs.

THE TRUTH IS GOING PRIVATE CAN ONLY LOWER COSTS IF, AND ONLY IF, ALL THE PRIVATE OPERATORS DECIDE THEY'RE NOT IN IT FOR THE MONEY.

We all know this is impossible, since we all know the business of business is to make a profit. And the only way to make a profit, and deliver the same quality and quantity of service is to charge more—not less, never less.

Private always costs more. We all know this from our own experience. When it comes to medical care, there is research to prove it. Studies done in Canada, the USA and elsewhere show that private health care is MUCH MORE EXPENSIVE than public health care.

That's mainly due to the fact private health care companies have to:

- set a lot of money aside for administration, as part of their relentless drive to “maximize return” and increase profits;
- divert significant amounts of cash to pay out in the dividends demanded by their owners and shareholders;
- pay business taxes, which don't apply to not-for-profit enterprises like public hospitals.

THE TRUTH IS we all know how business works. Something better never costs us less. Never.

BIG FAT LIE

Going private will shorten line-ups.

THE TRUTH IS PRIVATE BUSINESSES CANNOT BE TRUSTED TO DELIVER SHORT LINES FOR MEDICAL CARE, ANY MORE THAN THEY DO IN BANKS, AIRPORTS, GROCERY STORES OR AT THE MOVIES.

Private business is notorious for making promises they know they can't possibly keep. That's why the warning “Let the buyer beware” still rings so true.

To believe private business can—or will—change its ways, just because they are selling us medical services, is just so much wishful thinking. This is a truth business can't hide—even in Alberta.

Longer line-ups in Alberta. For the past three years, the Calgary Regional Health Authority has contracted out all of its cataract operations to private companies. Calgary patients now wait 13 months or more for their surgery.

Meanwhile in Lethbridge, the wait is just three to four months. That's because Lethbridge never went private. All cataract surgeries in Lethbridge are still done within Medicare, within THE PUBLIC HEALTH CARE SYSTEM.

The same thing happened in Britain, Australia, and New Zealand: going private increased waiting time.

THE TRUTH IS waiting and waiting and waiting for care is the standard—once private operators are allowed into a public system.

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PHONEY 'FACTS'

It's possible to protect Medicare while at the same time promoting a parallel private health care system.

BOGUS! This might be possible in a parallel universe, in another galaxy. But, not on this planet.

Here on earth, any and all private health care weakens, then destroys, the ability of a public, not-for-profit health care system to deliver first class care.

Private care drains away “the best people” by paying them more.

Private care drains away resources by promising quick care for routine, “profitable” treatments.

This will leave the public system to carry the weight of providing the most

complicated and costly care. The public system will be constantly called on to do more and more with less and less. Medicare's fate will be sealed.

First, it will be seen to be second class; and then it will actually become a second class health care system.

Letting the rich buy faster and better medical treatment will take pressure off the public system. ▶