



Medicare Action Kit 2011

FACT SHEET #1

Debunking the myths

What they're saying...

Medicare, our public health system, is not sustainable. Costs are completely out of control. Wait times are a proof the public system doesn't work. Our only choice is to privatize. Privatization will reduce costs and wait time, and will offer better quality.

Sounds familiar? This is the message too many politicians and media have been hammering home for years now.

Make no mistake: private interests are on a rampage against our public health care system. Those people who would benefit from privatization are beating the crisis drum. We need to push back and make sure the public knows the truth.

In October 2010, CUPE held a national health sector meeting in Victoria. Many experts (including Bob Evans, Bob Wollard, Damien Contandriopoulos and Natalie Mehra) addressed these myths.

The truth is....

The amount of money that is invested in hospitals is approximately the same as it was 35 years ago, between 3.2 and 3.6 per cent of GDP; most costs are not exploding.

Some costs however are going up more quickly, such as drugs, equipment and physicians. These areas already have a strong private component.

If health care costs are taking a larger and larger share of provincial budgets, it's mostly because provincial governments have been cutting taxes and revenues and slashing other programs. This explains health taking a larger percentage of provincial expenses.

Health care workers (if we exclude physicians) account for the lowest increases in costs, and sadly represent a smaller and smaller part of total investments in health care.

For-profit private clinics costs more, partly because of profits and higher administrative costs, and most often offer lower quality.

Privatization will not reduce wait times in the public system. In a context of human resources shortages, privatization would aggravate the problem.

When we look at it closely, the people pushing for more privatization are the same who would benefit financially from privatization: private clinics, drugs companies, private insurers and the super rich.

What can I do?

- **Find our YouTube videos.** Go to YouTube and use search words "CUPE health care myths"
- **Watch our YouTube videos,** click "Like" and share with friends
- **Talk and write to your member of Parliament**
- **Share the facts** with co-workers, friends and family
- **Join your local health coalition**

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