



IN CLINICS

Public Solutions

**KEEP PROFIT OUT
OF HEALTH CARE**

To protect and expand public health care, our governments must enforce the Canada Health Act and guard against private, for-profit services. Access to care should be based on medical need, not ability to pay.

CUPE



Did *you* know?

- Private, for-profit corporations are eroding the public and universal nature of health care in Canada.
- The Canada Health Act says health care must be publicly delivered without user fees or extra billing. But governments are encouraging private, for-profit surgical and other speciality clinics to open across the country, creating a two-tier system of care.
- Wealthier people can afford the high fees that private clinics charge, allowing them to buy their way into faster treatment. This deepens inequality between the high-income Canadians and the rest of us.
- Wait times for many medical services are far too long. But studies show for-profit clinics make things worse. They pull medical staff away from the public system, decrease the hours of service, and make wait lists even longer.
- For-profit health care is more expensive, of lower quality and less safe. A 2011 study found that knee surgery for injured workers in a for-profit clinic cost \$3,200 compared to \$960 in a public hospital – and it took them more time to return to work after surgery.
- In Canada it is legal for doctors to refer patients to private clinics they own or have a share in, whether that is the best choice for patients or not. There is no law in Canada that prevents this.

PUBLIC HEALTH CARE PRIORITIZES PEOPLE OVER PROFITS.

In Canada, we support and take great pride in our universal public health care system. We value that it ensures everyone has equal access to medically-necessary services when they need it.

Our health care system faces challenges. But the best solutions to meet them are public solutions. Public solutions respect the values of equity, fairness and universality. The fact is we won't solve the wait-time problem by allowing wealthy patients to pay for faster service at private clinics.

We need more, not less, investment in the public system.

- The federal government must apply the Canada Health Act to all health care services. It must put an end to illegal user fees and extra billing, and compel provinces to follow the law. Taxpayer money should go to support health care, not for-profit clinics.
- Provincial governments need to take active steps to reduce wait times by protecting and expanding our public health care system and opposing private, for-profit clinics.
- Staffing levels, wages and benefits should be increased across the health care system to reduce wait times and improve quality of care.
- Cuts to health care funding must be reversed and funding restored, so everyone can access the care they require.

PUBLIC SOLUTIONS DELIVER MORE, COST LESS AND COVER EVERYONE.

Two-tier health care only benefits the wealthy and results in longer wait times for the rest of us. We shouldn't have to worry about whether we can afford to pay for the care we need. We need governments to use legislation to protect health care from profiteers.

We deserve better. We need to demand the federal and provincial governments to act now.

To find out how, or for more information, visit our website:

cupe.ca/health-care-public-solutions

or e-mail us: **public-solutions@cupe.ca**

