

news release

September 11, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Budget update makes important steps toward better health care: BC Health Coalition

Victoria — The BC Health Coalition says today’s budget update is a strong start toward better health care for the people of B.C.

“We’re encouraged to see a budget update that charts the course toward improving health care services, including plans to tackle issues that impact our health like addiction and poverty,” says Edith MacHattie, co-chair of the BC Health Coalition.

Today’s update provides resources for a robust response to the opioid crisis, recommits to a 50 per cent reduction in MSP fees, and invests in home support and residential care for seniors.

“The cut to MSP fees will make a big difference for so many struggling to afford life in B.C.,” says MacHattie. “The province’s plans to scrap the previous government’s onerous process to apply for individual fee reductions will make sure everyone can get a break on the fees quickly.”

The coalition says the \$322 million outlined in the budget update to provide an immediate response to the opioid crisis is a vital step.

“Immediate support is so desperately needed to tackle this emergency. We’re pleased to see that the new resources will flow directly to health authorities, and toward supporting the new Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions,” says MacHattie.

The update also commits to restore the UBC Therapeutics Initiative to revive the critical program that provides people in B.C. with a reliable source of evidence-based information on prescription drugs.

The coalition says new health minister is faced with many pressing challenges. “700,000 people in B.C. can’t find a family doctor and B.C.’s wait times for some surgeries are among the longest in the country,” says MacHattie. “This update is a strong start and we’ll be pushing for action on these issues in the coming months.”

-30-

For more information contact: Adam Lynes-Ford, Campaigner: 604-787-6560 (cell)

phone: 604.787.6560 | email: adam@bchealthcoalition.ca | www.bchealthcoalition.ca