

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE February 21, 2017

BC Budget misses mark on MSP fees, fails to tackle crisis in seniors care

Victoria – Today’s provincial budget largely ignores British Columbia’s seniors, despite a rapidly aging population and urgent need for services.

“This budget is a major missed opportunity to finally care for our seniors properly,” said Adam Lynes-Ford, BC Health Coalition Campaigner. “Part of the nearly \$1 billion surplus could be used to make seniors care available and affordable, but the province is using it instead to replace MSP fee cuts.”

Lynes-Ford argues that the MSP fees need to be eliminated entirely and rolled into the progressive income tax system. Today’s budget does not include a plan to replace the lost health revenue, nor does it outline how or when the fees will be scrapped altogether.

“Nine in ten of B.C.’s seniors care homes are understaffed and it is harder than ever to get home support,” says Lynes-Ford. “Yes, MSP fee reductions will provide some relief for seniors and their families, but without adequate seniors services in place, these families will still face major affordability challenges well beyond those posed by MSP fees.”

Today’s budget comes days after Health Minister Lake announced the province will sign a health deal with the federal government that falls far short of our health spending needs.

Key health care services that nearly \$1 billion could be used for instead of covering MSP reductions:

- \$100 million to adequately staff B.C.’s seniors care homes
- \$2.9 million care hours in B.C.’s seniors care homes
- Introduce wait times reduction measures in every B.C. operating room
- New long term care beds to meet the needs of B.C.’s growing seniors population

–30–

For more information or to set up interviews contact:

Adam Lynes-Ford, Campaigner

cell: 604.787-6560 email: campaigner@bchealthcoalition.ca | www.bchealthcoalition.ca