



News Release

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Privatized health care not the answer: SFL

The organization that speaks for the province's working people says today's decision by the Supreme Court in the Chaoulli case should not be interpreted as a green light for privatized health care in Canada, but rather as a clear message that more needs to be done to bring down waiting lists and better fund the existing public program.

The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour says the lawsuit which prompted the legal action was the result of a lengthy wait for a medical procedure in Quebec. Waiting lists grew across Canada in the late 1990s because the Chrétien government was slashing federal contributions to Medicare and other health services. The origin of the problem is not in the system being non-profit, comprehensive and publicly administered. The difficulties we've encountered are related to the cuts in federal funding in the previous decade.

The Federation of Labour also points to the fact that since the Chaoulli case was launched in 1997 there have been two federal-provincial agreements on health care aimed at restoring an equitable cost-sharing of Medicare.

SFL president Larry Hubich said, "We do not see how permitting some businessmen to skim a profit off medical services is considered an advance. What we should be doing now is resolving to make the necessary improvements to the universal, comprehensive system we have built since Medicare began in 1962. The federal and provincial governments need to reassure people that they will have health care available to them when they need it regardless of the size of their bank balance."

For more information contact Larry Hubich at 537-7330 (cell)