

For Immediate Release
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**NDP WANTS PROVINCE-WIDE REVIEW FOLLOWING
EVIDENCE OF QUEUE-JUMPING AT MOUNT ST. JOSEPH HOSPITAL**

VICTORIA—A second publicly-funded hospital in the Lower Mainland has been found taking money from private operators for the use of medical diagnostic equipment, prompting NDP Health Critic Adrian Dix to call for a full review of waitlists and queue-jumping in B.C.'s health care system.

"The B.C. Liberals are keeping an untold number of patients waiting for medically necessary procedures," said Dix. "But Health Minister George Abbott doesn't know how many people are out there waiting, the average wait time, or how to begin to resolve the problem. A full and comprehensive review is needed to find out what the problem is, because clearly, the Minister doesn't have the answers.

"And if the Minister refuses to initiate a province-wide review or fully utilize the existing capacity in the public system to reduce wait times, then the message to patients is clear: if you want to end your suffering, then you had better be prepared to pay."

Since the Opposition revealed that private health care operators were paying St. Paul's Hospital to jump the queue for access to its MRI machine, the Ministry of Health has launched a review of the hospital's practice. They found hundreds of violations of the *Canada Health Act* and the *Medicare Protection Act*, as well as evidence that Mount St. Joseph Hospital is selling access to medical diagnostics like CT scans and ultrasound devices to private operators at the expense of public patients.

"When the Opposition first raised these concerns, Minister Abbott denied that illegal queue-jumping was taking place," said Dix. "When patients came forward with stories of paying private companies for access to a publicly-owned MRI at St. Paul's Hospital, he insisted that the practice wasn't happening at any other hospital. Now we learn that diagnostic equipment is being rented out to private operators at Mount St. Joseph Hospital."

"It is time for the Mr. Abbott to end this game of denial and launch a province-wide review immediately," said Dix.

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