

For Immediate Release
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HEALTH MINISTER MUST ADDRESS FUNDING CRUNCH AT FRASER HEALTH

VICTORIA – The Fraser Health Authority’s funding shortfall of \$65 million means cuts to patient services and bed closures, Opposition Health Critic Adrian Dix said today.

“Despite warnings that bed closures and service cuts will be the result of a funding shortfall, the Health Minister refuses to address the budget crunch his government has forced on the fastest growing health authority in the province,” said Dix, who raised the matter in Question Period in the Legislature today.

In a memo to Fraser Health staff, CEO Keith Anderson warns that the authority “will need to rein in our spending by \$65 million if we are to operate within our available resources.” Mr. Anderson also notes that “many of the good ideas and opportunities we would like to seize on behalf of our patients, residents and clients will have to be set aside, while we focus on the ‘must-do, mission-critical’ activities.”

“Back in January the former Chair of the Fraser Health Authority, Keith Purchase, resigned, citing inadequate funding for the region and the bed closures and services cuts that would be the result of underfunding,” said Dix. “The Minister ignored Mr. Purchase’s warnings, and it looks like he is going to ignore Mr. Anderson’s concerns as well.

“The real shame is that it is patients who will suffer from the Campbell government’s short-sightedness.”

Dix also pointed to an announcement earlier today by the doctors at Langley Memorial Hospital as an example of the real affect of funding shortfalls on patient care. In a statement the doctors said, “the medical staff at Langley Memorial cannot support continuing to do more with less. The impact of doing so will jeopardize our ability to deliver quality care to our patients and meet the needs of our growing population.”

“\$65 million is a major shortfall of funding for a health authority,” said Dix. “Wait lists are growing, services are being cut, and doctors and nurses are speaking out – and still the Minister refuses to take the issue of health funding seriously. He is doing patients a disservice by pretending that everything is okay.”

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