

For Immediate Release
July 05, 2007

HEALTH DEFICITS SHOW CAMPBELL, ABBOTT MISLEAD PUBLIC, SAYS DIX

VANCOUVER—The fact that the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority is heading for a \$35.5 million deficit this year after having ended the 2006-2007 fiscal year with a \$44 million deficit is further proof that Premier Gordon Campbell and Health Minister George Abbott are misleading the public about health care funding, says New Democrat Health Critic Adrian Dix.

“The Campbell government’s reluctance to discuss its inadequate funding for health care raises questions about whether they will impose service cuts and new user fees to British Columbians who require services from the health care system,” said Dix, the MLA for Vancouver – Kingsway.

Dix said he has been informed that when the 2006-2007 public accounts come out in the next few days, they will show that Coastal Health ran a deficit of about \$44 million. The government is covering the deficit despite the fact that health authorities are required to balance their budgets.

“The Minister of Health fired the government’s appointee, Trevor Johnstone, as chair of Coastal Health in January over the authority’s deficit. The fact that the authority’s deficit is being forgiven shows that the Campbell government is finding it harder to hide the truth about their inadequate funding of health care,” Dix said.

“Now I have been informed that Vancouver Coastal is on track to run a \$35.5 million deficit during the fiscal year that began on April 1. This deficit at such an early stage in the budget year puts the government under an obligation to bring the revised health budget before the Legislature for consideration.”

Dix said that along with signs of strain emanating from the Fraser Health Authority and elsewhere, the continuing deficit at Vancouver Coastal shows that Campbell Liberals’ reorganization of health care in the province is breaking down.

“It is patients who will wind up paying for the B.C. Liberal underfunding of health care. It remains to be seen whether that price will be paid in new service fees, which are under consideration by health authorities, by new service cuts, or both ways,” Dix added.

“It’s time for Gordon Campbell and George Abbott to begin telling the truth about what they plan to do with our health care system. With the Conversation on Health coming to Vancouver on Saturday, it is even more urgent that the Campbell government come clean immediately on its health spending plans.”