

For Immediate Release
July 10, 2007

CAMPBELL GOVERNMENT IGNORING INCREASE IN VIOLENCE IN HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

VANCOUVER – Following another violent attack on a nurse at Surrey Memorial Hospital, the Campbell government must get serious about addressing violence in the health care system, New Democrat Health Critic Adrian Dix said today.

“There is mounting concern over the increase of violence in our hospitals,” said Dix, the MLA for Vancouver-Kingsway. “This is a major issue facing health care professionals right across the province, yet the Campbell government insists on pushing health authorities to cut costs by contracting out security services.”

According to Worksafe BC, there have been 3,233 violent assaults on health care workers between 2002 and 2006. These attacks have resulted in 163,173 work days lost and a cost to Worksafe BC of over \$23 million during that period.

“These statistics speak to the need for increased security measures so that our health care professionals can do the important work they do in a safe environment,” said Dix. “Security in our hospitals – the security of patients and health care professionals – is not the place to cut corners.

“B.C. is experiencing a shortage of health care professionals, including nurses. This is the wrong message to be sending out to anyone considering this line of work,” said Dix. “We need to be encouraging people to enter the health professions and ensuring that we retain the health care professionals we already have.”

Dix said that the issue of security has been repeatedly raised by doctors, nurses and support staff, but the government has consistently failed to address the issue. “In fact, instead of ensuring that our hospitals have highly trained, integrated in-house security the government has pushed health authorities to contract out the service.

“The Campbell government’s response to this issue has been the exact opposite of what is needed,” said Dix. “It is time that changed, and the Premier step in to ensure those working in and accessing our health care system are safe.”

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