

For Immediate Release
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LOWER MAINLAND ON THE BRINK OF ACUTE CARE CRISIS: DIX

VANCOUVER—Leaked documents obtained by the New Democrats show the Lower Mainland is on the brink of an acute care crisis.

A planning document authored by Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health Authorities confirmed that the Lower Mainland region is currently short 550 acute care beds. By 2020, the shortfall will grow to 2,608 beds – the equivalent of six to eight acute care hospitals.

“The documents show just how badly the Campbell government has neglected our public health care system,” said NDP Health Critic Adrian Dix. “They have starved health authorities for dollars to the point where they can no longer keep up with growing demand.

“It’s no secret that the population of the Lower Mainland is set to grow dramatically. It’s no secret that our population is aging. Yet the Campbell government refuses to make the investments in health care to meet those demands,” said Dix.

“In fact, the B.C. Liberals reduced the number of acute care beds between 2001 and 2004 – 457 beds in Fraser Health and 158 in Vancouver Coastal. This represents the current shortfall of beds.”

Dix noted that the shortfall could be partially offset by improved planning and investments in alternative care, but that such initiatives would not be successful without strong leadership from the Campbell government. The document shows that the needed leadership is not there at the moment.

“When British Columbians visit a hospital, they are faced with severe Emergency Room delays, hallway medicine and lack of available beds,” said Dix. “Without significant commitment from this government – a commitment to build capacity and invest in acute care – British Columbians can expect this crisis to get much, much worse.”

- 30 -