

**For Immediate Release**  
**March 10, 2008**

**NEW PRIVATE INSURANCE SCHEME ILLEGAL  
AND EXPOSES FAILED CAMPBELL/HARPER HEALTH RECORD, SAYS DIX**

**VANCOUVER**—The New Democrats are calling on Gordon Campbell to immediately shut down a private health wait list insurance scheme that has set up business within B.C.'s borders.

"This is another example of a company that is actively soliciting for clients that have the ability to pay for the privilege of queue jumping. It's illegal, it violates both provincial and national health legislation and action must be taken now to end this practice," said NDP health critic Adrian Dix.

"The very existence of this insurance scheme exposes the failure of the Campbell government's record on health care. Apparently, the Campbell government thinks it is okay for people to pay thousands of dollars extra to get access to medically necessary care that should be available through MSP, said Dix.

"Along with the Harper Conservatives, they failed to deliver on wait times in B.C. and Canada, and have left our health care system vulnerable to profiteering."

Acure Health Corp. is an Alberta company that promotes the Medical Access Insurance plan. For an annual fee of eight hundred to twelve hundred dollars individuals purchase insurance that allows them to access health services covered under the province's Medical Services Plan (MSP) after they have waited to receive that service 45 days or longer in the public health system. Clients can get expedited access to specialists within twenty-one days or less for an additional fee. Those with chronic diseases however, will have a difficult time accessing this insurance no matter how wealthy they are.

Dix pointed out that the last thing this province needs is to have more health resources diverted away from the public system to serve private interests. With many communities struggling to attract doctors and nurses now, B.C. is already in the midst of a full blown health sector skills shortage.

"Our health professionals are robbed from us to provide service to those who can pay more. Citizens should not have to pay to get timely access to services they already pay to receive through the Medical Services Plan," said Dix.

"The Campbell Liberals tolerance of this scheme, and that there could even be a market for this type of service in B.C., is a condemnation of this government's record on health. The cost of private insurance has skyrocketed in recent years for employees and employers as a result of Gordon Campbell's cuts to public health care. It has led to more two-tiered health care and increased costs, said Dix.

"This scheme and others like it will only make that problem worse," said Dix.