

**For immediate release  
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**COPEMAN DECISION CLEARS THE WAY FOR MORE  
PRIVATIZED HEALTH CARE SAYS NDP**

**VICTORIA**—Today's decision on the Copeman clinic opens the door to further privatization of health care, and New Democrats are calling on the Campbell government to make the findings of the Medical Services Commission audit public.

"This decision was made behind closed doors in the complete absence of public participation," said NDP leader Carole James. "It is very disturbing that such important public policy discussions are kept hidden from the public."

Today, Health Minister George Abbott revealed that the Commission has determined the Copeman clinic does not violate the *Canada Health Act* or the *B.C. Medicare Protection Act*. However, Abbott stopped short of releasing the actual decision and findings, saying he will leave that up to Mr. Copeman.

The Copeman clinic charges patients thousands of dollars a year to access services that are covered under the Medical Services Plan, including a fee of \$3,500 for the first year of enrolment in its "Elite Program" and \$2,300 for subsequent years of enrolment.

Abbott also stated the B.C. Liberals are not prepared to rule out private care in B.C.

"The B.C. Liberals have moved forward with private health care initiatives on an ever increasing scale," said NDP Health Critic Adrian Dix. "The government is refusing to defend public health care and have created a system where people can buy their way to the front of the line."

"We believe that taxes and MSP premiums should entitle everyone access to the highest quality of health care, and we will continue to fight the for-profit health agenda of the Campbell government."

Recent figures released by the Canadian Institute for Health Information show British Columbia's share of private health spending has risen at a faster rate than the rest of Canada.

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