



Canadian Health Coalition

“If you believe good health care is a right of all Canadians, then you cannot allow private businesses to disrupt the solidarity of your health system or influence the cost of quality of your health services.”

- Dr. Arnold S. Relman, Professor Emeritus at Harvard Medical School and Emeritus Editor-in-Chief of the *New England Journal of Medicine*

PROTECT CANADA'S PUBLIC HEALTH CARE

Canadians deeply value their public health care system and the access it provides to quality care for all, regardless of ability to pay. That care is being threatened by court challenges to the *Canada Health Act* and provincial/territorial health insurance plans. Challengers want to see more private, for-profit diagnostic, surgical and medical clinics — even though these facilities increase costs to the public system and patients, reduce access, and lengthen public wait times.

Increased cost to the public system

Private clinics do not reduce costs to the public system; in fact, costs increase where private clinics exist. Many private surgical clinics, find loopholes in — or violate — the *Canada Health Act* to charge for medically-necessary procedures that would be covered publicly. Out of 42 private for-profit MRI/CT clinics across the country, 41 illegally charge patients for medically necessary scans. Costs at private facilities are consistently much higher than in public facilities, yet quality and results are typically the same or worse.

Reduces access to health care

For-profit clinics for those who can afford to pay don't help others get better or quicker access to health care. In fact, because private facilities poach scarce health professionals like physicians, nurses and technologists, the public system must struggle with fewer resources. Cherry picking the healthiest, wealthiest patients means that for-profit clinics make lots of money and leave the high cost, high-need patients to the public system. The result is a public health care system with fewer health professionals caring for sicker patients with less resources.

Does not reduce wait times

Statistics Canada found that Montreal residents have the hardest time finding a family doctor. Yet, Montreal has a large number of "boutique" physician clinics available to those willing to pay high prices. When Ontario introduced a private cancer clinic, wait times were unchanged a year later. [The evidence shows that private for-profit clinics lead to longer wait times in the public system.](#)

Get informed: For more information on the threat to Canada's health system from private, for-profit care, visit savemedicare.ca.

BY THE NUMBERS

Half a million: In a period of less than 30 days, an audit found almost half a million dollars in illegal extra billing had taken place at Vancouver's private Cambie Surgery Centre.

375%: An expedited knee surgery performed in a private clinic cost 375% more than a non-expedited knee procedure in a public hospital. The more expensive procedure had worse return-to-work outcomes.

2,200: At least 2,200 more Canadians would die needlessly each year if Canada's hospitals were privatized, according to a study published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*.

16: The number of additional weeks Manitoba patients had to wait for cataract surgery if their surgeon had a private and public practice as opposed to those with only public practices.