

CFUW Policy: Health Care [MSP]

CFUW 1996 CFUW Nepean (Ontario)

Resolved, That the Canadian Federation of University women call upon the government of Canada and the **provincial** and territorial governments to ensure quality of health care and preventative health care programs which are universal, accessible, comprehensive, portable and publicly administered and that all reforms to the health care system incorporate these five principles of Medicare as outlined in the Canada Health Act (1984).

Background

British Columbia is the only province in the country that charges monthly MSP premiums—a flat rate tax—for healthcare. In January 2017, the BC Government implemented changes to the BC Medical Services Plan. Essentially, the government refused calls to put an increased burden on high-income earners, or roll MSP into income tax increases, opting instead to spread the increase evenly from middle and arguably lower-middle income earners to high earners.

In addition to being an unfair system of raising revenue for healthcare, the collection of premiums is a difficult and complicated process carried out by private companies who are hired at great expense. In fact, as of February 2016, according to the Canadian Taxpayer's Federation, BC was short about a half-billion dollars due to overdue MSP payments. Furthermore, there are issues of accountability and transparency as it is difficult to trace the disposition of funds. Surprisingly, funds do not go exclusively to healthcare but into general government coffers.

The solution is to pay for healthcare through an annual income tax return as is done in every other province in Canada. This results in a more equitable system with few collection difficulties and little administrative waste. For an example, in Ontario: www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/tax/healthpremium

All Candidates Meeting Question

I am a member of the Canadian Federation of University women, which in the Victoria area has more than 250 members. We have been concerned for some time about how BC funds its health care system. BC is the only province to charge monthly premiums. While the BC government has mentioned eliminating MSP premiums, there is no clear indication of what would replace this system nor any commitment to timelines. If your party forms the government, will you eliminate this very inequitable and administratively wasteful system and pay for health care through an annual income tax return with graduated rates geared to income as is done in every other province in Canada?