

Privatization in Healthcare

AT WHAT COST?

The possibility of saving \$7.9 million healthcare dollars per year may sound good to many at first, but what will be the long-term costs? What are the costs associated with cutting 280 good paying healthcare jobs? Has Minister Boudreau really calculated the costs?

First, when you cut 280 well paying healthcare jobs, you shatter the dreams of 280 individual that were hoping to get one of those jobs, one day, maybe that would help them out of poverty. And what is the cost associated with all those shattered dreams? Is it really worth it?

Second, if there are 280 less healthcare jobs in NB, then that could possibly means 280 more individuals living in poverty in the province either scraping by in minimum wage jobs or stuck on welfare, because there are 280 less good paying jobs to go around.?

Third, poverty in Canada, let me tell you, is not as benign as one might think; it is not to be taken lightly. Now, if I was to say to you that studies have shown growth stunting in children from low income families living right here in this country. Yes! Canadian children! Canadian children undernourished to the point of affecting their growth: shorter than normal for their age. And NB kids living in poverty are no exception. Too many of our children are malnourished to the point of permanent damage: permanent damage to their bodies and permanent damage to their brains. So, I ask you again... Is it worth it?

And with brain damage, unfortunately for those children, also comes learning difficulties. And with learning difficulties comes lower education levels. And with lower education levels comes lower paying jobs. And then the cycle starts over and over again. Sometimes for generations, after generation. So I ask you... At what cost?

Another known fact is that people living in poverty often have more chronic health problems. And who says more chronic health problems also says more visits to the healthcare system. And more visits to the healthcare system ultimately means even more costs. So... At what cost?

And once in hospital, it has ~~also~~ been documented that the poorest members of our society stay on average significantly longer in hospital because of aggravating factors. Longer hospitalizations which also come with more added costs. So... At what cost?

It has also been documented that people living in poverty are more prone to infections once in hospital. Plus, studies have shown that the privatization of hospital environmental services is often associated with a decrease in hospital cleanliness due to cost cutting measures leading to even more infections for the most vulnerable in our society including, of course, the poor. And who says infections, also says longer hospital stays. Therefore, again, more costs...

But, has Minister Boudreau really taken the time to calculate all these hidden costs

And I have only talked, so far, about the first 280 jobs to be cut, the ones that we know of for sure. I am not even talking about turning the Extra-Mural Service and some nursing homes to the private sector. Hasn't it been shown that the wages in the private sector are far below public sector wages? Is it really worth the risk? Do we really want to risk having so many of our brave and hardworking healthcare workers also end up living under the poverty line? More working poor? Really? Is it worth the risk?

The NB government has promised, time and time again, that they would work hard at reducing poverty and that it was one of their main priorities as written in a few of their official documents like in "Overcoming Poverty Together, The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan 2014-2019", and in the "New Brunswick Family Plan Framework Document". But... How does cutting healthcare jobs fit in with trying to reduce poverty in this province? Doesn't it instead do the opposite: just push more children and families into poverty? More children damaged beyond repair! Never mind even the costs to society for one minute... Because in the end, really, it's just not right!

In New Brunswick, there are already approximately 100 000 individuals living in poverty with about a quarter of them being children. Way too many children's lives sacrificed! And... For what? There are already way too many NB families living in poverty. So... Why add another 280 more? And... At what cost?

We believe in building a more humane society based on the respect and dignity where everyone will have their basic needs met. We want a New Brunswick without poverty. We want a society which gives each and everyone one a decent income on which they can live and not only barely exist. So, of course, we do not agree with forcing more and more families into poverty. We do not believe it's worth the cost!

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