

Subject: Public Health Care Motion

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CC: "Mayor and Council - DNV" <Council@dnv.org>, "Senior Management Committee" <managecomm@dnv.org>

A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CREST

District Council recently received a request to support Public Health Care from the British Columbia Division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, CUPE. In a letter to Municipal Councils it stated that CUPE has embarked on a nation wide campaign to strengthen and expand public health care. Municipal politicians, it stated, could play an important role in protecting public health care by passing a resolution in support

Based on this request, I submitted a resolution to Council stating

Whereas as Canadians we pride ourselves on the fact that Canada has provided universal, publicly accessible health care to its citizens for over 30 years; and

Whereas the principles of the Canada Health Care Act are the basis upon which our public health system was formed and have provided public access to life saving and life enhancing care for over a generation; and

Whereas Canadians are challenged as never before to protect, restore and upgrade, where necessary, our Public Medicare System

Therefore be it resolved that the Council of the District of North Vancouver support Canada's public health care system and the principles of the Canada Health Act; and

That the Council of the District of North Vancouver call upon the Federal and Provincial governments to ensure that the principles of the Canada Health Act are maintained and the public health care system is publicly delivered and upgraded, where necessary, and that adequate public funds be provided to do so.

I submitted and supported CUPE's request because the effects of lack of funding for health care will be felt first and foremost in Canada's cities and municipalities. This includes the District of North Vancouver, where lack of health care will negatively impact on the quality of life of our citizens.

I supported it because it is an issue which has been raised by municipalities repeatedly over the years resulting in resolutions submitted to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM).

These institutions have been specifically established to discuss municipal issues with senior levels of government. During their annual conventions representatives of senior levels of government hear from the level of government closest to the people, namely; local government directly. This includes health issues. Indeed public health is one of the major issues discussed on an ongoing basis - it impacts municipalities more directly than any other issue. Such conventions are invariably attended and addressed by the Premiers of Canada's provinces and senior members of the Federal Government, including frequently the Prime Minister of Canada.

However, all this was lost to the members of District Council who voted against the motion.

One District Councillor was particularly upset claiming that health was not a local government responsibility and that it was far too complex to be dealt with by the District. That this resolution will be supported by other of municipalities including the City of Vancouver, Burnaby, the City of North Vancouver and the majority of all the other lower mainland municipalities clearly escaped this new Councillor.


The BC government is trying to shift its health care responsibilities onto the shoulders of those who can afford it the least. This at a time when international drug corporations make record profits.

The CUPE motion was an opportunity for the District to add its voice on behalf of

District residents including seniors who find it more and more difficult to pay for escalating prescription drugs. Municipalities, where 90 % of Canada's population resides, are directly affected.

The CUPE motion stated that the health care system needs to be protected, restored and upgraded where necessary. In many countries legitimate expenses for bona fide recreation programs are tax deductible. This encourages the public to engage in regular and supervised exercise programs. It has shifted health care from reaction to prevention with huge savings to the health care system. We have the means to do the same thing using our own public recreation facilities. We have both the facilities and the trained personnel to do so. But when I made a motion that we ask the government to emulate this there was not even a seconder to my motion.

To maintain and enhance public health is certainly an issue which affects us at the local level. But it is difficult to communicate with people who don't understand that this is so - that these issues are all interconnected and that municipalities are the first line of defense in the struggle to maintain our existing health care system and/or that they would be the most adversely impacted if our present health care system were to be diminished or if we lost it altogether.

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