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For Immediate Release

Is a Health Corporation Really the Answer?

The provincial government recently announced that the health system on PEI will be operated by a new arm's length corporation called the PEI Health Services Corporation. The Union of Public Sector Employees is questioning the prudence of yet another attempt to restructure the health system, especially at a time when fiscal order is paramount.

Shelley Ward, the President of the Union of Public Sector Employees, asks "do we really need to create a corporation with an appointed board to run health care at a time when the province is running an \$84 million deficit? Isn't this just another example of how our tax dollars are being squandered? This is the fourth restructure attempt of the health care system in the past fifteen years."

"In 2005 the Pat Binns government eliminated four regional health boards and the Provincial Health Services Authority. The administration of health care was then placed within the department of health itself," said Ward. "Since then improvements in government accountability and spending have been directed largely to providing health care services for Islanders. For example, we now have a much needed stroke unit, there have been improvements to our cancer treatment center, and we have seen important decisions on the delivery of health care services made under the scrutiny of the current government."

"Why is government so intent on creating distance between itself and health care delivery?" asked Ward. "It appears they are tired of taking responsibility for the increased cost of health care and are hoping a corporation with an unelected board can provide them safe haven! I think we should all consider the possibility that the creation of the PEI Health Services Corporation could signify the beginning of the end for our publically driven, publically delivered health care system on Prince Edward Island."

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Please contact Mark Barrett at 892-5335 (or toll-free at 1-800- 897-8773) to arrange an interview.