

Government Continues to Privatize Healthcare in PEI

In the September 11, 2026, article entitled “P.E.I.'s premier is 'outraged' about a for-profit health company” (CBC), Premier Rob Lantz criticized PEIDoctor.com. This private, fee-for-service company provides medical appointments to visitors and non-residents who can afford to pay.

The Premier called the practice “outrageous” and said he directed the Department of Health and Wellness to find a way to stop it. On social media, he said he was outraged that a private corporation was putting for-profit health care ahead of Islanders who need care. UPSE agrees. Islanders should not have to compete for access to health care with people who can pay to skip the line. But the Premier's comments raise an important question: If private health care is wrong when a private company provides it, why is his government continuing to expand the use of private providers and contractors within our public health-care system?

Over the past several years, the government has increasingly turned to private companies to provide costly services that the public system could deliver more affordably. Examples include:

- Private agency staff: Health care has increasingly relied on private agency RNs, LPNs and, more recently, Residential Care Workers. The cost to taxpayers was an estimated \$45 million this past fiscal year.
- Self-managed care: Home-care services have increasingly moved to a self-managed model, growing from a budget of approximately \$350,000 to an estimated \$9 million this past fiscal year.
- Private cataract services: A FOIPP request showed that \$4.37 million was spent on cataract procedures, with approximately 91.5% performed by a private clinic.
- Private MRI services: A FOIPP request showed that \$2.1 million was spent on MRI services delivered by private providers.
- Private consulting and executive leadership: Health PEI has also relied on private consulting arrangements for executive leadership, with some individuals receiving compensation well above public-sector budget estimates.
- Private knee and hip services: Government has issued a request for proposals for a private clinic to provide these services, further expanding private delivery of health care.
- Long-term care: Government continues to rely on private operators to build and provide long-term care, adding significant long-term costs to the public system.

Ongoing reliance on private companies to deliver core public services is not a long-term solution. It costs more, takes resources away from the public system, and makes it harder to recruit and retain

the workers we all need. If the Premier truly believes that public health care is worth protecting, UPSE welcomes that position. Islanders deserve to know that their tax dollars are being used wisely to strengthen public services, not gradually replace them with more expensive private ones. Actions speak louder than words. If Premier Lantz is serious about protecting public services, and believes that privatizing healthcare is outrageous, then it's time to stop expanding privatization and start investing in the public system Islanders depend on.