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Medavie

A new face of privatization

Growing role in privatization of health care

Under the guise of being a not-for-profit corporation, Medavie Incorporated is playing an increasingly large role as an operator of privatized health care services. At first it took over health care services that were provided by for-profit or not-for-profit companies, so Medavie's involvement didn't require privatization. However, it is now starting to take over services that were public and are being privatized by provincial governments.

Provinces are using Medavie's not-for-profit status as a way to cover up privatizing important health care programs. But when Medavie takes over these services, we see the same problems that exist with other privatized health care services.

Company history

Medavie was formed when 2 health insurance providers in the Maritimes — Maritime Medical Care and Blue Cross of Atlantic Canada — merged in 1999. The amalgamated company was initially known as Atlantic Blue Cross. It was renamed Medavie Incorporated in 2003 and adopted the name Medavie Blue Cross for its insurance operations and parent company in 2005.

Ambulance services and expanding

Before it amalgamated with Blue Cross of Atlantic Canada to form Medavie, Maritime Medical Care took over the operation of ambulance services in Nova Scotia. Since the formation of Medavie, the company has taken over ambulance services in New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and parts of Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Massachusetts. The company controls paramedic training in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

Over the last few years, Medavie has steadily expanded its health care operations beyond ambulance services. Medavie now runs 911 services, Telehealth services and New Brunswick's Extra-Mural Health Program.

Secrecy and lack of accountability surround Medavie operations

Even though Medavie is responsible for how over \$1 billion in public funds is spent, the public can't see Medavie's financial statements. New members of the board of directors are picked by the existing board. The only people they are accountable to are the other members of the board.

For the public, having Medavie running health care services is no different than having a private for-profit company run them. The financial well-being of the company comes ahead of the public good.

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