



# NEWS RELEASE

## **B.C. health-care wait times and student test scores worsen despite marked increases in government spending**

May 7, 2024  
For immediate release

**VANCOUVER**—Despite substantial spending increases by the British Columbia government, the province’s health-care wait times have increased and student test scores have declined, finds a new study released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan, Canadian public policy think-tank.

“Although the B.C. government has ramped up spending, British Columbians have not seen improvement in key indicators of health care and education,” said Ben Eisen, senior fellow at the Fraser Institute and co-author of *Understanding British Columbia’s Public Management Challenge*.

After nearly a decade of relative spending restraint, from 2016/17 to 2023/24 the B.C. government increased program spending by 23.5 per cent (on a per-person basis).

More specifically, during that same period, the government increased per-person health-care spending by 13.9 per cent—yet the province’s median health-care wait time increased from 26.6 weeks to 27.7 weeks.

And from 2016/17 to 2020/21 (the latest year of comparable data), the government increased per-student spending by 12.9 per cent, yet since 2015 student test scores (PISA) have fallen by 20 points or more in all three categories—reading, mathematics and science.

Meanwhile, due largely to spending increases, the province’s finances deteriorated from a budget surplus of \$2.7 billion in 2016/17 to a projected \$5.9 billion deficit in 2023/24.

“Higher spending and its related increase in taxes and debt has not produced better health care or education in B.C.,” said Tegan Hill, senior policy analyst at the Fraser Institute.

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