

## Unite against the vax tax

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As we head into the third year of revolving government lockdowns, Canadians have every right to be furious. But we shouldn't let politicians divide us. And we shouldn't be duped into believing that we are going to tax our way out of a pandemic.

'We're looking for a health contribution for adults who refuse to be vaccinated for non-medical reasons,' announced Quebec Premier François Legault.

Legault's 'health contribution' is just another tax added to the heavy burden of income, business, sales, property, payroll, import, fuel and carbon taxes that Canadians are already forced to pay. In 2020, the average family spent more on taxes than on basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing combined (according to the Fraser Institute). More taxes won't make COVID-19 go away.

Particularly if you're vaccinated, you should fight against politicians that want to open up this Pandora's box. Today, politicians will say the unvaccinated should pay. What about tomorrow?

Will you need to pay a tax every time you put butter on your popcorn? If you gain weight after Christmas, will you have to write a cheque? When your kid falls off their bike trying a new jump, will a tax bill come with their stitches?

People do lots of things that land them in the hospital. It's past time to discuss private health-care options and letting people spend their own dollars on their own health. But heaping more taxes onto overtaxed Canadians won't solve the pandemic problem.

Legault's new tax follows a clear trend: The government answer to any problem is to hammer Canadians with higher taxes.

Politicians want us to drive fewer trucks, so they slap us with a carbon tax. And when carbon taxes don't reduce emissions, they hammer us with higher carbon taxes.

Bureaucrats think home prices are too high, so they fund a report calling for a new tax on homeowners.

Instead of dividing Canadians and targeting certain taxpayers, it's time to hold our politicians and bureaucrats accountable for the health-care mess.

Before COVID-19, Canadians were paying more than most of our industrialized peers for health care, according to the Fraser Institute. But Canada ranked second worst on the number of acute care beds per capita and third worse on the number of doctors per capita.

'The average occupancy rate of the province's acute care beds was 96 per cent in 2018-19, including approximately 28 hospitals where the average occupancy rate for the year was over 100 per cent,' according to the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario.

British Columbia hospitals were also above capacity before COVID-19.

That's why politicians were worried about the government system in the early days of the pandemic. Alberta Premier Jason Kenney said if there were no lockdowns, 'our health system would collapse under the chaos.'

Two years later, the federal debt has ballooned past \$1 trillion after spending more than \$500 billion responding to COVID-19. The provinces have spent about \$400 billion on health care since the beginning of 2020, according to their budgets.

Despite two years and all that money, Ontario's top health-care bureaucrat is still defending lockdowns as 'necessary' to 'protect

our health system capacity.?

This leaves us with two questions.

First, how many hundreds of billions of dollars do taxpayers need to fork over before the government health-care system isn't on the brink of collapse?

Second, shouldn't the politicians and bureaucrats that have continued to collect their six-figure taxpayer-funded paycheques be held accountable for not coming up with better solutions to protect health-care capacity?

Instead of dividing Canadians and hitting us with new taxes, it's time to hold the politicians and bureaucrats accountable for their mess.