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| ***Province*** | ***Législature*** | ***Session*** | ***Type de discours*** | ***Date du discours*** | ***Locuteur*** | ***Fonction du locuteur*** | ***Parti politique*** |
| Colombie-Britannique | 40e | 1e | Discours sur la santé | 23 juillet 2013 | Terry Lake | Minister of Health | British Columbia Liberal Party |

It's a pleasure and an honour to be standing before the members of this House today to debate the estimates for the Ministry of Health. Before we begin, I'd like to introduce the members of my staff who've joined me here today. I've got my Deputy Minister of Health, Stephen Brown.

I have our chief administrative officer, Elaine McKnight, behind. We have Assistant Deputy Minister Manjit Sidhu to my left and executive director Nick Grant behind me as well.

I'd also like to thank the 1,240 Ministry of Health employees who work so diligently for the public service and also the thousands of health care professionals and allied workers, as well as the people throughout British Columbia working in the health care system, for the outstanding work that they do.

British Columbians have entrusted our government with a mandate to build a strong economy, a secure tomorrow and a lasting legacy for generations to come, and as Minister of Health I'm committed to fulfilling that mandate. It means protecting and enhancing the health care system while ensuring the best possible value for taxpayers.

As many of you know, currently B.C. has some of the best health outcomes in all of Canada while controlling health care spending relative to other provinces. I think that's something we can all be proud of. It means we are delivering excellent results for patients while also conserving every tax dollar we can. As Minister of Health I have a mandate to continue this record.

Preserving a strong British Columbia for ourselves, our children and our grandchildren means making the right choices now to control spending and to balance the budget in health care. We understand the system is facing increasing pressures precipitated by a growing population and, of course, an aging population as well.

Budget 2013 is a budget that shows restraint despite the temptation to spend now and worry later. We're balancing the budget, but we're also continuing to invest in health care, of course. Over the next three fiscal years the Ministry of Health will receive an additional $2.4 billion in funding. We continue to manage the rate of growth in health expenditures, and that's the right thing to do for system sustainability and, of course, for the taxpayers as well.

Before the worldwide economic crisis, health funding was growing by about 7 percent a year. In this year's budget we've put the growth down to 2.6 percent, which means we're managing wisely, but it also means that we will require innovation to achieve this bending down of the cost-increase curve. We're driving down administration costs and focusing available resources where they are most appropriate.

Through innovation we will improve our performance and the efficiency of our health system and ensure the long-term sustainability. We're doing this in three primary areas.

The first is focused on health promotion and disease prevention. Our healthy families B.C. agenda is an example of where we are helping people to keep healthy by creating conditions that improve physical activity levels, increase healthy eating and, of course, reduce tobacco use.

The secondary focus is developing a system of integrated primary and community care — programs like Home is Best, which helps seniors with high care needs live longer in their homes as an alternative to being admitted to residential care and avoiding preventable hospital admissions.

Lastly, we are ensuring that we have a high-quality and accessible hospital care system. Over the next three years investments in new medical equipment and modernized health facilities will reach $2.5 billion. Examples include the redevelopment of B.C. Children's and Women's Hospital in Vancouver, the redevelopment of Royal Inland Hospital in the great city of Kamloops, the replacement of the Queen Charlotte–Haida Gwaii hospital and a new Surrey Memorial Hospital emergency department and critical care tower.

As leaders we all have a duty to be disciplined for taxpayers today and a responsibility to be fair to future generations. Our health care system is founded on the principles of caring for those who cared for us and helping those who need our help now, and our targeted investments are paving the way for a brighter future for the next generation.

I welcome any questions that opposition Health critics or other members of the House may have in respect to our budget and the programs of the Ministry of Health.