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B.C. hospitals use beds to house homeless, says NDP health critic

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An NDP health critic has found data from B.C.'s Ministry of Health that reveals a rising trend where homeless patients who no longer require acute care remain in those beds, reports the CBC.

Comparing the number of patients staying in such beds in 2001-02 with 2008-09 reveals an increase of 192 per cent.

The data reflects how homelessness, insufficient housing and income disparity are contributing to rising hospitalization rates and health-care costs, NDP health critic Adrian Dix says.

He argues the B.C. government's failure to implement a coherent housing strategy and larger poverty reduction plan is to blame.

But B.C.'s Health Minister Kevin Falcon says the homeless are allowed to stay longer in hospital in order to improve their chances of recovering.

"The reason why that has increased is because part of our homelessness strategy now, we don't just send these folks back onto the street. We keep them in the ALC beds until such time as we have housing we supports we can send these people too," Falcon told CBC.

Source: <http://news.nationalpost.com/2010/11/15/b-c-hospitals-use-beds-to-house-homeless-says-ndp-health-critic/#ixzz15ONoPvrD>