

B.C. medical plan should cover treatment for infertility: Doctor

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THE PROVINCE

A Vancouver fertility specialist is one of many doctors in B.C. and across Canada who have long been calling for public funding of costly infertility treatments.

According to Dr. Sonya Kashyap of the Genesis Fertility Centre, one in six Canadian couples of child-bearing age suffer from infer-

tility, but many can't access effective treatments like in vitro fertilization (IVF) because it can cost up to \$10,000.

While many European countries and even U.S.-based insurance providers cover IVF, B.C.'s Medical Services Plan covers only the investigative tests for infertility, leaving the cost of the corresponding treatment up to the patient.

"In a country that prides (itself) on provid-

ing universal health care ... the consideration of funding for infertility is important," said Kashyap.

"There is no doubt that infertility is a medical disease. It deserves to be treated as such."

While both Manitoba and Quebec offer tax credits for the treatment, Kashyap pointed to Ontario, where the provincial government recently extended its health coverage

to include one round of IVF for women under age 43.

"I'm hopeful that Ontario will provide a good example ... that hopefully we could consider implementing here," said Kashyap.

"It's important for people to keep this discussion open ... to keep lobbying and keep making it visible and apparent the burden that infertility causes on our society."

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