

PRODUCED BY
SASKATOON
COMMUNITY CLINIC

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WEATHERING THE STORM TOGETHER

The Creation of Medicare & Community Clinics in Saskatchewan



Birch Hills byelection, 1959



Arriving at Saskatoon Community Clinic, 1962



Celebrating Saskatoon Agreement, July 23, 1962

I was born on an extremely dusty night in June of 1934, in Wakaw, Saskatchewan



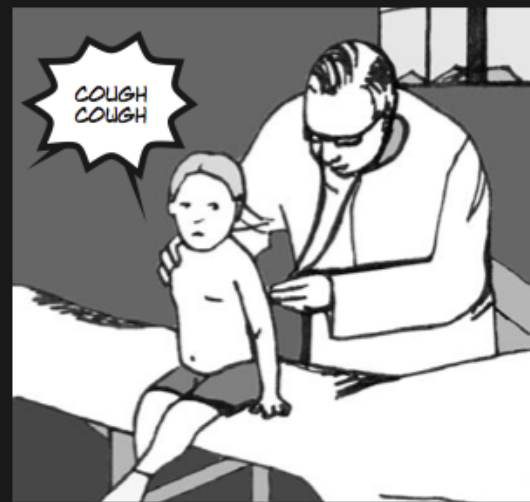
Unable to see through the dust, my father had to feel his way to the neighbours' using a rope that my family and the Boyers had run between our houses to help us find our way in blizzards and dust storms. Many people had ropes like this to help each other in those hard times.



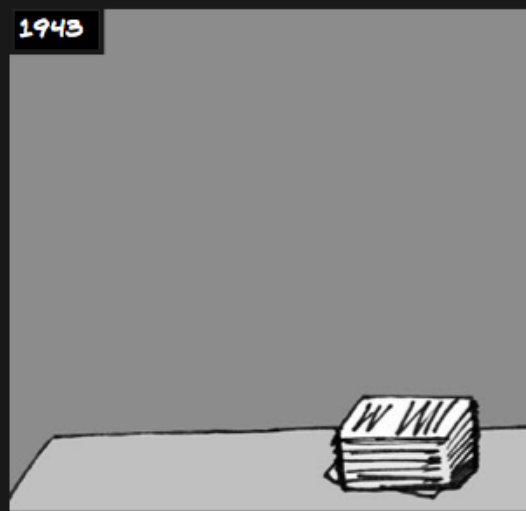
From the very start, I found it hard to breathe. Mrs. Boyer had to remove the umbilical cord from around my neck. But I survived.



I suffer from severe asthma and had to see the doctor frequently as a young boy.



As I grew, so did my parents' medical bills.



When my father died in the war, things became even harder for me and mom. The neighbours did what they could to help, but the bills kept coming.



WWII and the end of the Depression ushered in new social programs around the world. People wanted to take better care of each other.

1945:
WWII ends

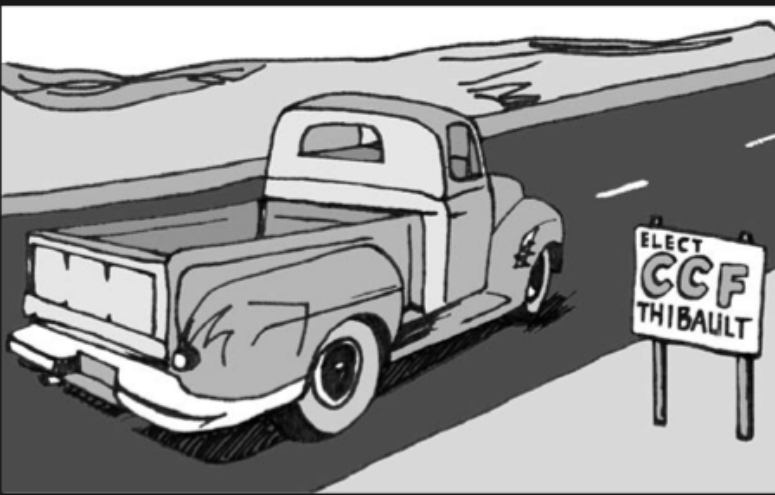
1947: The CCF government introduces a Hospital Insurance program to cover costs of hospitalization.

1939: Great Depression ends, World War II starts

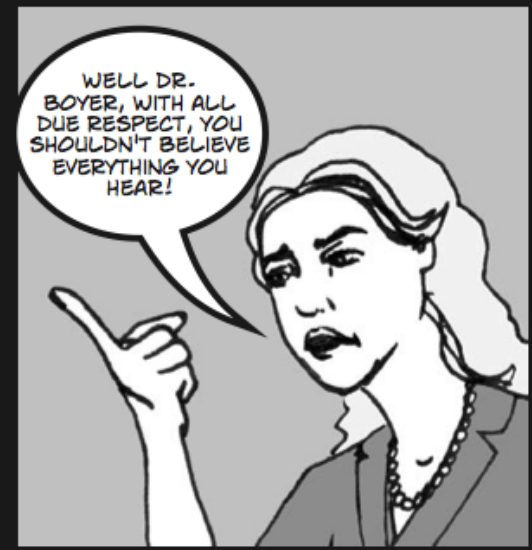
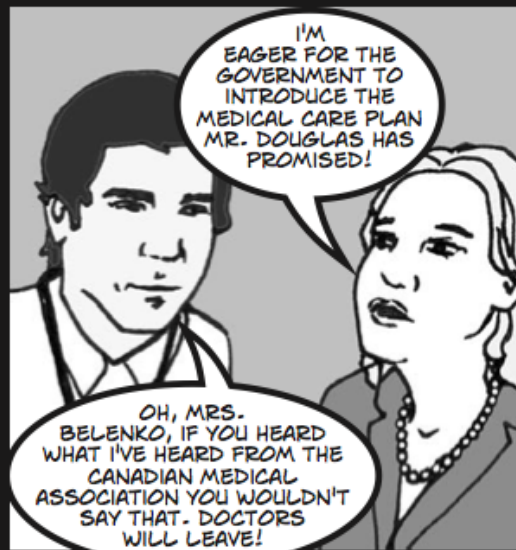
1944: Tommy Douglas' Co-operative Commonwealth Federation elected to government in SK, promising public health care and strong social programs.

1946: For the first time in North America, comprehensive Medical Care Insurance is introduced in the Swift Current Health Region as a prototype for the province. It would be many years before the province could afford to expand it throughout the province.

In 1959, there was a by-election to elect a new Member of the Legislature (MLA) after our MLA passed away. By then I had been farming for nearly ten years. We took a rare break from seeding to see one of our heroes, Tommy Douglas, in Birch Hills.



A few weeks later, I had an accident on the farm.



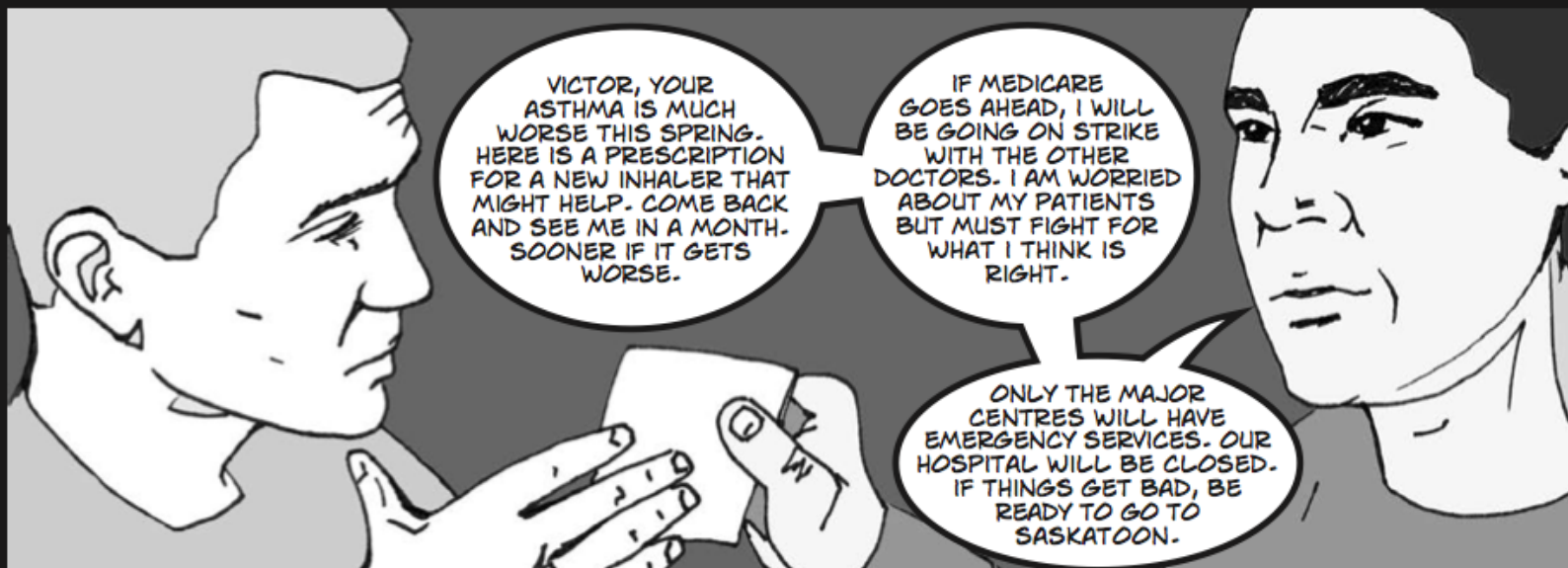
1958: Federal Government under PM John Diefenbaker commits funds for Hospital Insurance like Saskatchewan's. Feds paying 50% of Hospital plan costs frees money for long-awaited Sask Medicare.

April 1959: Douglas announces plans to move forward with Medical Care Insurance plan during by-election in Kinistino Constituency.

October 1959: College of Physicians and Surgeons announces its opposition to universal, comprehensive medical care insurance.

Winter 1959-60: Medical Care Advisory Planning Committee formed.

As the possibility of Medicare became more real, people started organizing. Those opposed to Medicare formed the Keep Our Doctors Committee. Those in favour, including my mom, formed Citizens in Defense of Medicare.



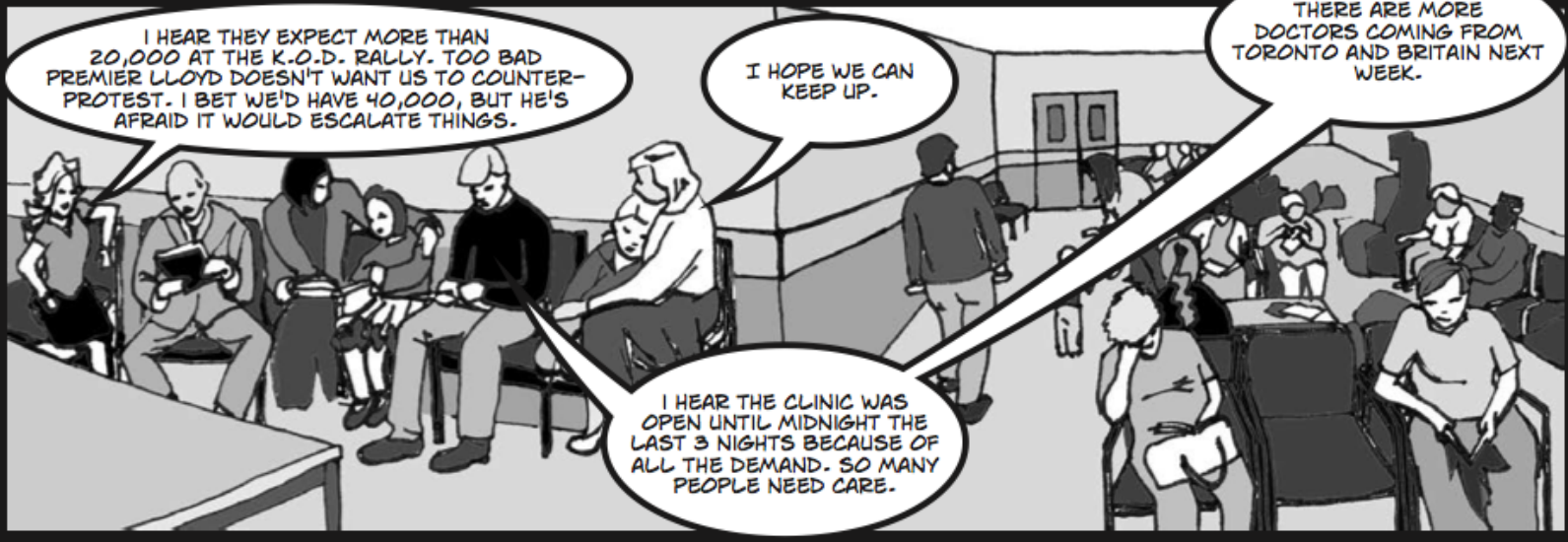
JUNE 30TH - NIGHT BEFORE THE STRIKE



<p>June 1960: CCF wins election on Medicare platform</p>	<p>September 1961: Advisory Planning Committee releases report recommending comprehensive medical insurance for all</p>	<p>October 1961: Douglas introduces Medical Care Act in Legislature</p>	<p>November 7: Douglas steps down to lead federal NDP and Woodrow Lloyd succeeds him as leader of the Saskatchewan CCF-NDP</p>	<p>November 17: Act Passes</p>	<p>May 1962: Doctors announce they will strike if the Medical Care Act is carried out.</p>
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In July, while the doctors continued to strike, my asthma acted up again and my mother & I paid our first visit to the brand new Saskatoon Community Clinic.



July 1, 1962:
Medical Insurance
Act comes into
effect. Doctor's
strike begins.

July 3, 1962:
Saskatoon
Community Clinic
opens.



Aware that the tide was against them, some doctors began returning to their practices.



The debate over medicare has rarely been as dramatic as it was during the doctors' strike, but there continues to be debate over public medicare and the values of co-operative healthcare provision. Those who believe in Medicare and Community Clinics must continue to fight to protect and improve them.

July 11, 1962: Keep Our Doctors rally at the Legislature much smaller than expected.

July 16, 1962: Lord Stephen Taylor arrives to assume the role of sole mediator between the government and the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

July 23, 1962: Strike ends when doctors and provincial government sign the Saskatoon Agreement.

September 1962: Just weeks after the strike, over 12,000 families and approximately 40,000 individuals have become members of 37 Community Clinics in Saskatchewan.

"COMMUNITY CLINICS WERE ON THE VERY FRONT LINE IN THE MEDICARE BATTLE IN 1962. THEY MADE MEDICARE POSSIBLE."

- ALLAN BLAKENEY, FORMER MINISTER OF HEALTH AND PREMIER OF SASKATCHEWAN

WHAT ARE THE COMMUNITY CLINICS?

Groups of citizens throughout the province believed so strongly in the concept of Medicare that they set up their own co-operative health clinics in the summer of 1962.

They were passionate and brave in their efforts to start Clinics on their own with few resources and little support in the medical community. The spirit and hopes of those pioneers continue at our Downtown and Westside Clinics in Saskatoon as well as at Community Clinics in Prince Albert, Regina, and Wynyard.



Oct. 2012 - Me at the new Westside Clinic bldg. on 20th St!



May 1969 - Sod-turning for new Community Clinic bldg. on 2nd Ave!



July 2012 - Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Medicare and Community Clinics

This publication was produced in 2012 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of medicare and Community Clinics in Saskatchewan.



Thank you to the members, volunteers, staff and partners who have contributed to the vitality of the Saskatoon Community Clinic over its entire history, including those who made this publication possible.

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While this story is based on the authors' understanding and interpretation of real events, the Boyer and Belenko families are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.