



**Canadian Health Coalition**  
**Coalition canadienne de la santé**

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Health Coalition attacks American TV ad in open letter to Barack Obama:

### **“Listen to Canadians, not Brian Day and his for-profit friends”**

(Ottawa, ON) In a tough open letter to President Barack Obama, the Canadian Health Coalition (CHC) is taking on Dr. Brian Day, current past president of the Canadian Medical Association (CMA), and an American conservative group running TV ads against health care reform.

“We are urging President Obama to listen to the overwhelming number of Canadians who value and depend on our public health care, not to Brian Day and his for-profit friends,” said Michael McBane, national coordinator of the Canadian Health Coalition. “Medicare has been good to Canadians since the 1960s when we parted from the American model.”

Dr. Day, whose private surgical clinic in British Columbia is currently under investigation by the B.C. government for illegal billing practices, appears in an ad running on American TV for Conservatives for Patient’s Rights (CPR). (<http://www.cpractionfund.org/>) The ad is part of a million dollar campaign attacking President Obama’s plan to overhaul the nation’s health care system. In the ad, Dr. Day – a strong proponent of privatizing Canada’s public health system – sides with those who would privatize the system, sharing horror stories of government-run health care programs.

The campaign sponsor, CPR, is a conservative organization founded by Rick Scott, the discredited former owner of Columbia/HCA, one of the largest private health care companies in the world. In 1997, his board of directors removed him from office during the largest health care fraud scandal in the United States. The company was forced to pay \$1.7 billion in fines for overbilling state and federal government health plans.

This campaign slogan- ‘Putting Patients First’ - is borrowed from the drug industry and really means ‘Putting Profits First’.

“Dr. Day and Rick Scott should not be allowed to speak for people who need and deserve quality health care,” said Mr. McBane. “We want President Obama to understand the benefits of Canada’s public health system.”

In the open letter, Mr. McBane points out several critical differences between Canadian and American health care.

“Mr. President, we know that you are deeply concerned about the 46 million Americans who have no medical coverage. We’re proud to say that Canada covers every Canadian citizen. Canadians live three years longer than Americans, and our infant mortality rate is 20% lower. Canada spends 10% of its GDP on health care, compared to 15.3% in the United States, yet we generally get more services. Economically, Canada’s public health system dramatically reduces costs for business, particularly the hard-hit manufacturing sectors, because of higher prices and administrative costs in the primarily private U.S. system.”

Mr. McBane urged the President to look at the consistent level of support among Canadians for the public health care system. “Canadians recognize our system can always be improved, but they overwhelmingly want public sector improvements, not for-profit private companies taking our scarce health care dollars. Our two countries need to stand together to strengthen public health care across the border and to protect the right to public health care from financially motivated doctors and insurance companies.”

“It remains shocking to us that Dr. Day, a past president of the CMA, is participating in a campaign to de-rail the efforts of the American people to secure their right to health care by misrepresenting the facts about Canada. This is a breach of fundamental ethical obligations of the medical profession, namely, a commitment to best evidence and avoidance of conflict of interest.

"Canadians and Americans both need more public health care not less. Private markets and commercial competition will make things worse, not better. "

*The Canadian Health Coalition is a not-for-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to protecting and expanding Canada’s public health system for the benefit of all Canadians. It includes organizations representing seniors, women, churches, nurses, health care workers and anti-poverty activists from across Canada.*

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Open Letter: <http://www.healthcoalition.ca/OpenLetter2009.pdf>  
TV Ads: <http://www.cpractionfund.org/>  
More on Brian Day: <http://www.healthcoalition.ca/doctorprofit.html>