



Canadian Health Coalition
Coalition canadienne de la santé

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MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Canada Health Act Annual Report:

*Parliament kept in the dark as provinces
sabotage Medicare*

OTTAWA – The Canadian Health Coalition (CHC) reacted today to the tabling of the *Annual Report on the Canada Health Act 2006-2007* with this warning: “Canadians are being kept in the dark about developments that threaten the integrity and viability of Medicare,” said Kathleen Connors, CHC Chairperson.

“Health Canada's Annual Report consistently fails to identify, let alone assess, significant privatization initiatives now underway, especially in Québec. Private delivery of insured health services have *Canada Health Act* implications if providers of such services charge patients for these services or allow them to jump the queue,” said Connors.

Health Canada has reporting obligations to Parliament and must monitor and enforce the five criteria and the two conditions of the *Canada Health Act*. The Auditor General found that Health Canada does not have the information it needs to identify non-compliance. The Department is therefore unable to tell Parliament the extent to which health care delivery in each province and territory complies with the criteria and conditions of the Act.

“The federal Minister of Health has a statutory duty to be the guardian of Medicare and enforce the *Canada Health Act*. Instead, we see Minister Clement look the other way as a few provinces sabotage the system by commercializing and privatizing health services”, said Connors.

“The Minister should point to the evidence that the proliferation of investor-owned, for-profit clinics can threaten the integrity and viability of Medicare, thereby undermining the objectives of the *Canada Health Act*. In particular, two-tier access to medical services, like MRI tests, violate the legal requirement that universal access to publicly funded services be provided on uniform terms and conditions,” added Connors.

The CHC has called on the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health to conduct hearings on Health Canada's deficiencies in *Canada Health Act* reporting, monitoring, and enforcement.

In the meantime, Canadians are encouraged to report violations of the Canada Health Act, including illegal fees and charges for medically necessary care. For more information: www.yourmedicarerights.ca

Download the 2006-2007 *Canada Health Act* Annual Report at:
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hcs-sss/pubs/cha-lcs/2006-cha-lcs-ar-ra/index_e.html

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