



Canadian Health Coalition Coalition canadienne de la santé

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MEDIA ADVISORY

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MEDICARE'S FUTURE AT STAKE

Supreme Court to rule on constitutionality of Medicare legislation
Historic ruling to be released Thursday, June 9th

OTTAWA — On Thursday June 9th at 9 :45 a.m. the Supreme Court of Canada will release one of the most important decisions in the history of the Charter. The case of Jacques Chaoulli and George Zeliotis v. Quebec raises two critical constitutional issues:

The critical legal issues in this case are:

Whether the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects the right to health care; and

Whether that protection applies to all Canadians, regardless of ability to pay, or just to the more affluent.

At stake in the Court's ruling on these questions is the future of universal public health care in Canada.

Chaoulli and Zeliotis and a number of interveners, including a group of senators led by Liberal Senator Michael Kirby and a number of for-profit health corporations, argued that the right to health means that private insurance companies must be allowed to provide private health care services for those who are able to pay for them. They have asked the Court to use the Charter to guarantee two tiered health care for the rich.

The Charter Committee on Poverty Issues and the Canadian Health Coalition intervened before the Supreme Court to argue that the Charter protects the right to health care of all Canadians, and requires that the publicly financed health care system provides quality care to everyone, regardless of ability to pay.

Counsel for CCPI and the CHC is Professor Martha Jackman, a renowned expert in the Charter and healthcare. She is available for interviews in either French or English, and she will be in attendance at the Supreme Court of Canada at 9 :45 a.m. when the decision is released.

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