



# Canadian Health Coalition Coalition canadienne de la santé

Fall 2005

2841 Riverside Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1V 8X7 CANADA

## STOP PRIVATIZATION NOW

CANADIAN HEALTH COALITION

### *Action Alert*

October 31, 2005

#### **Issue: Federal Inaction to Stem the Tide of Health Care Privatization**

*Dear citizen,*

Medicare is under threat from privatization like never before. It is critical that the Prime Minister hear from you about this urgent matter.

**Wait time reduction strategies will fail without action to stem the tide of privatization of delivery of health services.** Every health care professional that leaves the public system to work in an investor-owned parallel system increases wait times and undermines the public system.

Health care costs will skyrocket out of control without a plan to stem the tide of privatization. Peer-reviewed evidence conclusively shows that for-profit health care facilities:

- a) have higher death rates than not-for-profit facilities;
- b) cost more;
- c) provide lower quality
- d) cream skim the profitable services and dump costly, complicated cases onto the public system;
- e) engage in schemes to cheat taxpayers and patients;
- f) compromise access to public services;
- g) provide less nursing care than in not-for-profit nursing homes.

Source: <http://www.healthcoalition.ca/micro.html>



[www.medicare.ca](http://www.medicare.ca)

Commissioner Roy Romanow found that greater privatization of health services will not deliver better or cheaper care, or reduce wait times. *“More to the point, the principles on which these solutions rest cannot be reconciled with the values at the heart of Medicare or with the tenets of the Canada Health Act that Canadians overwhelmingly support.”*

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The Prime Minister promised “to strengthen the public health care system” and his Minister of Health promised to “stem the tide of privatization”. But now, the position of the federal Liberal government appears to be twofold: a) pretend privatization isn’t happening; and b) keep silent about the growing threats to Canada’s single-payer universal health care system.

While the federal government stands idly by, the enemies of Medicare have gone on the offensive like never before. A leading promoter of privatization of the delivery of health services is Liberal Senator Michael Kirby. Mr. Kirby, a senior director and shareholder of a multinational for-profit health care corporation, Extendicare Inc., joined a consortium of for-profit surgical clinics and the Canadian Medical Association as interveners in the Supreme Court Chaoulli case to have the ban on private health insurance struck down as unconstitutional.

These powerful vested interests will be joined by Dr. Chaoulli in a conference in Vancouver, November 11-12, 2005, to exploit the federal vacuum of leadership and plan the expansion of a parallel U.S.-style health care system.

This perversion of democracy and of Canadian values must stop. Canadians expect that the Prime Minister of Canada will stem the tide of privatization and defend public health care delivery from a hostile commercial takeover. Otherwise Canadians must assume that the real position of the Liberal Party of Canada is the one advocated by Liberal Senator Kirby.

Please take a moment today and *Stand on Guard for Medicare*. Phone the Prime Minister’s Office or send him a letter, fax or email (hand-written letters are the most effective) and be sure to copy your Member of Parliament.

Also, call your local radio talk-show or write a letter to the Editor of your local newspaper (and copy us). Get active, talk to friends, distribute this *Action Alert* — remember, an election is just around the corner.

Thanks for your on-going support.

Canadian Health Coalition  
[www.medicare.ca](http://www.medicare.ca)



#### **SAMPLE LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER**

*Dear Prime Minister,*

*Our Medicare system is under serious threat from privatization. Powerful vested interests, including a member of your caucus, Senator Michael Kirby, are campaigning to pry open the public health care delivery system and spread private, for-profit investor-owned delivery of services.*

*As Commissioner Roy Romanow concluded, privatization of delivery will not fix wait times, or deliver better or cheaper care. More importantly, this is a perversion of Canadian values as those with money will buy their way to the front of the line.*

*Why is your Minister of Health not performing his statutory duty to report, monitor, and enforce compliance with the Canada Health Act?*

*According to the Auditor General of Canada, Health Canada "is unable to tell Parliament the extent to which health care delivery in each province and territory complies with the criteria and conditions" of the Canada Health Act.*

*Prime Minister, you must show decisive leadership now and stop the hostile commercial takeover of Medicare.*

*Sincerely,  
Your Name*

#### **Right Honourable Paul Martin**

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