

Open Letter to the Premiers on Health Care from the Canadian Health Coalition

Dear Premiers,

As you deliberate on Thursday about the future of health care in Canada, we ask you to do two things. Heed the passionate, impatient pleas of Canadians insisting that the Romanow report be fully and immediately implemented. Respect the values of Canadians and the indisputable evidence favoring not-for-profit delivery. Agree to ban further for-profit delivery of necessary health services.

We draw your attention to the voice of tens of thousands of Canadians who have signed a national on-line petition <<http://www.petitiononline.com/romanow>> urging governments to fully implement recommendations from the final report of the Commission on the future of health care in Canada. This uncensored outpouring of grassroots public support calls most frequently and forcefully for a stop to for-profit health-care and a start to greater accountability.

The signatories come from every province and territory, and reflect the views of self-identified Liberals, Tories and New Democrats. They include a broad cross section of society from thousands of large and small communities across Canada. Among the signatories: ordinary citizens; activists and non-activists; reverends; nuns; nine and ninety-year-olds; health-care professionals including nurses, nurse practitioners, doctors, dentists; hospital board members and workers; federal and provincial politicians; chartered accountants; columnists; actors; students; professors; people with disabilities, retirees, and others. Some of the comments from across Canada ...

"All provinces must be made to be publicly accountable for all the funding provided by the Federal government. The targeting of funds to specific areas is entirely appropriate regardless of the rantings of people such as Ralph Klein. Alberta's allocations go into general revenue and who knows where they are siphoned off to from there. Press on with all haste!"

Ken H. Newman, Calgary AB

"The Federal government has to ensure that national standards are established and followed and not allow any of the provinces to wiggle out of their responsibilities and allow for a dangerous precedent to be set in the erosion of those national standards. The American private health insurance companies are champing at the bit to get in to the Canadian market and erode our national healthcare system. Don't let them do it!"

Donna Jean MacKinnon, Vancouver BC

"Make the provinces accountable for medicare dollars. Train and pay health care professionals adequately. Provide better support for home care and preventative medicine. Hear us roar, or watch us vote."

Gail M. Thompson, Regina SK

"This is absolutely necessary to invest in Medicare to ensure its survival for future generations. Medicare is one of the most important and necessary requirements for a viable, caring society."

Brenda Lesyk, Warren MB

"Tony Clement is incurring the ire of seniors by dabbling in private-public enterprises that risk the resources of our hospitals. Seniors will know who NOT to vote for by his decision to go ahead with MRI, CTScan privatizing ventures."

M. Helen Heeney, Orillia ON

"The Canadian Alliance says that bringing in a private system would be better. In the U.S. they have a private system where anywhere between 40-50 million Americans are un-insured. They (in the U.S.) spend 14% of their GDP. Canada spends about 9%. Please explain how the private system is better?"

Fidel Fuentes, Montreal PQ

"We're standing on a threshold of a subject that every Canadian citizen has a stake in. I'm signing this petition not only because it is the right thing to do, but because it will bring change. If these changes are a success, that's wonderful for every Canadian. If they fail, we will learn from them, we will make them work through experience and planning. But the important fact remains is that we need to ACT. A country that doesn't adapt slowly dies with the times, and so does its people. Changes must be made, and this report is some of the best ideas we have. Let's implement them and move forward."

Daniel St Onge, Grand Falls NB

"Canadians have sent a clear message - do not privatize our health care system. Not one cent of our tax dollars should go into privateers pockets!"

Donalda MacDonald, Little Pond PEI

"Health care is the most important issue facing Canada today. We have the money necessary to fund appropriate levels of health care. It is the greatest and most defining aspect of Canada. Providing appropriate public health care is truly democratic, sensible and decent. Moreover, it is less expensive than the private health care or mixed public and private health care systems."

Gary H. Levine, Halifax NS

"The Romanow Report needs to be implemented in its entirety and quickly. Don't allow the Provincial Governments to cause delays and compromises"

C. Mike Manning, St. John's NL

"I am consenting you to do your duty."

David Kaosoni, Cambridge Bay, NU

"Medicare is a national treasure that can work if we are willing to fund it adequately."

Suzette Montreuil, Yellowknife NT

"A report that considers all Canadians."

Iris V. Cormier, Whitehorse, YT

Premiers, Canadians expect you to strengthen our publicly funded health care system.

Kind regards,



Michael McBane
National Coordinator
Canadian Health Coalition

cc: Right Honourable Jean Chrétien, Prime Minister of Canada
Hon. Anne McLellan, Minister of Health

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