

THANK YOU  
FRONTLINE HEALTH  
CARE WORKERS

← EMERGENCY

**CANADIAN HEALTH  
COALITION**  
REPORT ON ACTIVITIES  
AND CAMPAIGNS  
2020



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# 2020 CANADIAN HEALTH COALITION **BOARD**

## EXECUTIVE

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**Pauline Worsfold RN**  
Chair  
Canadian Federation  
of Nurses Unions (CFNU)



**Linda McLaren**  
Secretary  
United Church of Canada



**Marie Clarke Walker**  
Vice-Chair  
Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)



**Rita Morbia**  
Co-Treasurer  
Inter Pares



**Vanessa Gruben** BScH, LLB, LLM  
Co-Treasurer  
University of Ottawa

## BOARD MEMBERS

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**Pat Armstrong** PhD  
York University

**Sandra Azocar**  
Alberta Friends of Medicare

**Morna Ballantyne**  
Public Service Alliance  
of Canada (PSAC)

**Michèle Brill-Edwards** MD  
University of Ottawa

**Dianne Frittenburg**  
Nova Scotia Health  
Coalition

**Terrie Hendrickson**  
BC Health Coalition

**Christina Warner**  
Council of Canadians

**Joel Lexchin** MD  
University of Toronto



(Pre-pandemic photo)

**Julie White**  
Congress of Union Retirees  
(CURC)

**Anil Naidoo**  
National Union of Public  
and General Employees  
(NUPGE)

**Keith Newman**  
and **Julie White**  
Congress of Union Retirees  
(CURC)

**Archana Rampure**  
Canadian Union of Public  
Employees (CUPE)

**Jane Mulkewich**  
United Food and Commercial  
Workers Canada (UFCW)

**Andy Savela**  
Unifor

**Pat Van Horne**  
United Steelworkers (USW)



# INTRODUCTION

Dear colleagues and friends,

The Canadian Health Coalition (CHC) was founded in 1979 out of a deep desire to keep our health care system public and universal. We have continued to work towards these goals for the past 42 years and are proud to see public health care as one of Canada's greatest social equalizers. With the generous support of our members, we live up to our slogan of "Protecting, defending and expanding public health care".

The impact of the global pandemic has required us to pivot as an organization, and some of our priorities have changed, while others have rocketed to the forefront.

Our inability to have a lobby on Parliament Hill last year on our priorities of pharmacare and a national seniors' care strategy was a big disappointment. But little did we know when we chose those priorities how important they would become over a very short period of time.

We have continued to promote both issues, and our members have been advocating for basic personal protective equipment for their members who are frontline workers. Sadly, workers all over Canada have died from exposure to COVID-19, and specifically, due to the lack of PPE. We grieve along with the

families for the loss of life and support our members in their continued efforts to protect their members and the residents.

One of the areas that has yet to be addressed by the federal government is the number of people who are without a job and, therefore, without benefits for drug coverage. Pharmacare needs to be a central part of "build back better," and our work puts us in a perfect position to continue to push for a national drug plan for everyone living in Canada.

This pandemic has laid bare the trouble with long-term care; in particular the for-profit sector, where it is more important to make a profit rather than to look after the people who live in the care facilities and the people who care for them. It reaffirms what we always knew and have been trying to bring to people's attention over the last number of years.

Last year, our dear friend and former spokesperson, Shirley Douglas passed away. She was a fierce advocate for public Medicare. She always had a twinkle in her eye and some shenanigans up her sleeve - just like the time she organized for a double-decker bus with a huge sign on the side promoting public Medicare during one of the first ministers

meetings. She arrived on the top deck with the bull horn at full volume, giving her passionate speech. She was a true Canadian icon and she will be missed.

I wish to thank our two staff members who moved on to other callings last year, Amélie Baillargeon and Melanie Benard. Their absence has been felt by everyone in the organization, reminding us of their valuable contribution.

To the Board and Executive of the CHC, your patience and willingness to answer emails, discuss issues, and guide and support the CHC in numerous ways are remarkable. A big “thank you” for sharing your time and talents so freely.

Respectfully submitted,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Worsfold".

Pauline Worsfold RN  
Chairperson



SHIRLEY DOUGLAS

# CAMPAIGNS

**“PROTECTING, DEFENDING AND EXPANDING PUBLIC HEALTH CARE”**

The Canadian Health Coalition is a leading campaign organization for public health care in Canada. Through research, advocacy, and public education, we work with member organizations, health care providers, experts, and community activists to defend, improve, and expand our cherished universal health care social programs.



The COVID-19 global pandemic has been devastating for people across the globe, and Canada is no exception. Since the outset of the pandemic, the Canadian Health Coalition has worked to protect Canadians, especially frontline workers, as well as racialized and marginalized communities.

We have been calling upon all levels of government to,

- Address existing health inequities and remove barriers for marginalized communities.
- Reopen facilities and beds that have been closed due to funding cuts and downsizing.
- Bring for-profit health care facilities under public control.
- Improve supports for health care workers and give them the resources and PPE they need.
- Ensure that all services are available free of charge and delivered publicly.

**“The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the extent to which our individual health is dependent on the health of everyone in our community. Public health care is our best defence against this crisis and others like it.”**

– Joint Statement, March 24, 2020



Nowhere has the pandemic exposed so many shortcomings as it has in long-term care. The Canadian military report in May about what it discovered in long-term care homes was shocking: “cockroaches and flies... rotten food...patients left soiled in diapers.” By every measure, the for-profit operators were the worst offenders.

The Canadian Health Coalition joined with members to deliver over 3000 emails to Ottawa, calling for the federal public servants’ pension fund to “Make Revera Public” by selling its stake in the chain to the government.

**“Dear Ministers Freeland and Duclos: Will you commit to an immediate divestment of PSPI holdings in Revera Inc., and to ensuring that all facilities become publicly owned and operated homes to allow our seniors to live in dignity and safety? I look forward to your response.”**

– Email sent by 3000+ supporters



After years of advocacy by Canadian Health Coalition members and allies, we are on the cusp of the founding of a universal, single-payer public pharmacare program for everyone in Canada. Providing Canadians with drug coverage will improve Canadians’ health, reduce public costs, and assist in Canada’s economic recovery.

However, the Liberal government’s commitment to pharmacare is not guaranteed. That is why the CHC has been pressing hard for the government to deliver on its pharmacare promises.



Through the CHC's leadership, over 150 organizations signed a joint letter to then Finance Minister Bill Morneau calling for, "the necessary minimum commitment of \$3.5 billion in total for pharmacare between 2020 and 2022, as well as maintained funding for a rare diseases strategy."

Even more, the Canadian Health Coalition stood alongside its allies and Peter Julian MP for the launch of the NDP's private Member's Bill C213, the Canada Pharmacare Act.

**"We actually see a big link between the current pandemic and the need for universal pharmacare."**

- CHC media commentary

## STOPPING HEALTH CARE **PRIVATIZATION**

Weak enforcement of the Canada Health Act and insufficient funding by the federal government has allowed right-wing provincial premiers to open the door to privatization of public health care. Corporate for-profit providers challenge the public health care system at every turn, looking for weaknesses.

The Canadian Health Coalition has pressed the government hard to increase funding conditional on strengthening our cherished public system, and the organization stands with its members and allies in opposition to the corporate health care "privateers."

**"The federal government must reaffirm its commitment to public health care by making long-term, substantial increases to the Canada Health Transfer and negotiating a new Health Accord with the provinces and territories."**

- Joint Statement of eight coalitions, December 10, 2020



(Pre-pandemic photo)

CAMPAIGNS





New corporate threats to our health care system can emerge at any time, and the Canadian Health Coalition remains vigilant, ready to confront privatization.

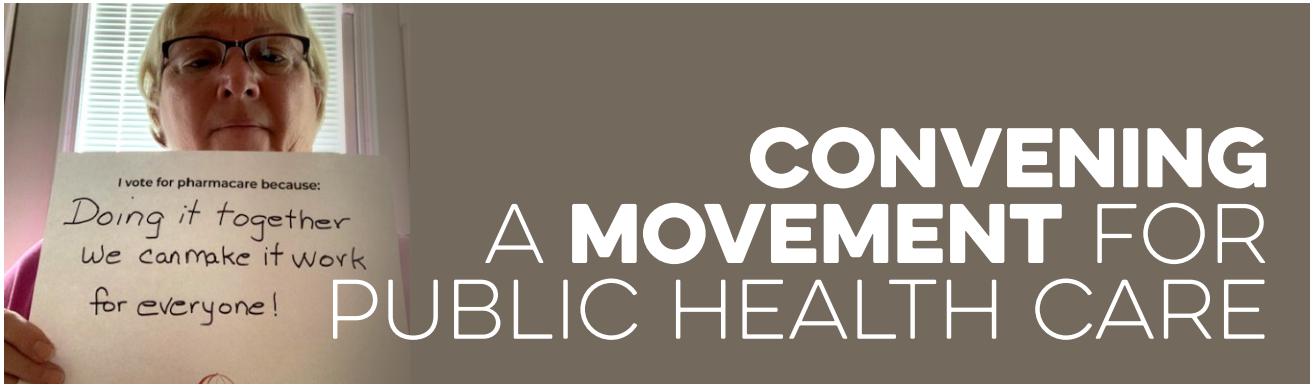
- Canadian Plasma Resources is establishing paid plasma collection centres across Canada, undermining the safety and viability of Canada's voluntary donation blood and plasma collection system. The CHC urged Health Minister Hajdu to call a temporary moratorium on new licenses for paid plasma collection centres during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Promoted by the pandemic, virtual health care online apps can both improve access to health care, but also serve as a Trojan Horse for extra billing, unregulated providers, and marginalization of those without digital skills or access. The CHC has been working with journalists and researchers to expose the potential dangers posed by virtual health care.



The Canadian Health Coalition brings together frontline workers, community advocates, and expert researchers in a powerful combination to promote Canada's public health care system. Our campaigns are informed by experienced researchers, including Dr. Pat Armstrong, Dr. Joel Lexchin MD, Dr. Michèle Brill-Edwards MD, Dr. Vanessa Grubin, as well as current and former research directors at Canada's leading unions.

Recent projects:

- Research report on Canada's long-term care system.
- Analysis of the emerging virtual health care market.
- Investigation of pandemic-related wait times.
- Contribution of health care chapter for the influential Alternative Federal Budget (CCPA).



As a coalition, the CHC coordinates the work of leading organizations to protect public health care through high-level advocacy with elected officials, public education campaigns, and policy development. It maintains interconnected networks of members and allies essential to an effective and united movement through list serves and regular meetings.

Current priorities for this movement include:

- Pharmacare
- Seniors' care
- Stopping privatization
- Provincial and Territorial Health Coalitions



(Pre-pandemic photo)



# GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

Engagement and donations by coalition members have remained consistent strengths of the Canadian Health Coalition, allowing it to embark on challenging campaigns with confidence.

The CHC can amplify its own and its allies' initiatives through a network of over 6,000 people using email and social media outreach, and this will grow substantially in the coming months.

The Board has initiated a review of its structure to ensure the organization can continue to pursue its campaigns and remain responsive to changing dynamics.



(Pre-pandemic photo)





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