



Friends of Medicare  
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March 31st, 2016

Dear Minister Philpott,

Twelve years ago today Canada's First Ministers signed a Health Accord reaffirming their continued commitment to the principles and criteria of the Canada Health Act that ensures all medically necessary care be publicly administered, comprehensive, accessible, portable, universal and delivered without user fees or extra billing. The First Ministers agreed to tie federal dollars to national standards which decreased wait times. The Federal government committed to a 6% escalating transfer for the duration of the Accord, and conversations on creating a national public drug plan began.

Two years ago today that Health Accord expired.

Today we, a coalition of professionals, unions, health and social justice advocates, patients and seniors' organizations are deeply troubled by the extent of violations of the Canada Health Act across the country, the decreased federal financial commitment beginning next year, and the lack of progress on a national public drug plan and a national seniors plan.

In the past year alone, the provinces have failed several times to abide by the Canada Health Act. Bill 20 in Quebec forces patients to pay for medically necessary treatment. Bill 179 will lead to the opening of private MRI clinics in Saskatchewan and allow those who can pay to jump the queue ahead of others. In Ontario, we've found multiple cases of extra-billing and user charges, especially for cataract patients. In British Columbia, private clinics are charging illegal membership fees, user fees, and double billing patients and the provincial health care system.



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We are writing today to urge you, the federal government, to uphold the Canadian values of health care based on need and not the ability to pay and enforce the Canada Health Act. We want you to ensure fair federal funding to the provinces and territories for the duration of a 10-year Accord and tie that funding to national standards. And Canadians need you to lead the provinces and territories on the creation and implementation of a national public drug plan and a national seniors care strategy.

It is up to the federal government to ensure that the provinces and territories are delivering health care according to the Canada Health Act. We, the undersigned, call on you to ensure all people in Canada can access the health care they need regardless of their ability to pay, wherever they live in Canada.

We look forward to your response.

Yours with warm regards,

Canadian Health Coalition  
BC Health Coalition  
Friends of Medicare  
Ontario Health Coalition  
Coalition solidarité santé  
PEI Health Coalition  
Health Coalition of Newfoundland and Labrador