Canada’s public health care system has the dubious distinction of having the worst wait times of any developed country. Health care costs have been increasing at an unsustainable rate, putting more and more financial pressures on the budgets of provincial governments. The situation is likely to get worse with Canada’s aging population.

Healthcare is an exclusive provincial jurisdiction. However, for years the federal government has insisted that the provinces satisfy a series of conditions set in the Canada Health Act in exchange for transfer payments. These conditions discourage innovation. Also, the money does not directly fund health care services. It is simply added to the provinces’ budgets and they decide where and how they spend it.

All this confusion and undue interference leads to bickering between Ottawa and the provinces over who is responsible for the failings of our health care system, and how much money Ottawa should contribute. It prevents the implementation of sound reforms.