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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Health Care System Needs Action, Not a New Health Act

New Parkland Institute report identifies health care challenges and proposes real solutions

EDMONTON – A new report released this evening by the U of A’s Parkland Institute says that addressing the key challenges being faced by Alberta’s health care system will require concrete action, not a new health act or charter.

The report, *Access, Quality and Affordability: Real Health Care Change for Albertans*, is the second in a two-part series entitled “The New Alberta Health Act: Risks and Opportunities”. It was written by Vancouver-based health policy researcher Colleen Fuller and Parkland Research Director Diana Gibson.

Using a combination of extensive research and public input received through a series of public forums held across the province last spring, Gibson and Fuller identify a list of key challenges facing Alberta’s health system today, including an increasingly fractured and profit-driven system, rising pharmaceutical costs, failure to address prevention and the social determinants of health, and a serious shortage of health care human resources.

“What we heard from Albertans is very similar to what Fred Horne’s committee heard,” says Gibson. “Albertans want a health care system that is accessible, affordable, of good quality and puts their interests first. However, instead of recommending a legislative overhaul like the government, we are recommending real action and changes on the ground.”

The report recommends six concrete actions the government can take to improve health care today:

- Reorganize the delivery system to make it more integrated and limit the role of for-profit involvement.
- Make decisions on what is covered in the system more transparent.
- Take action on pharmaceutical costs.
- Reject activity-based funding.
- Invest in prevention and the social determinants of health.
- Tackle the health care human resources challenges.

Gibson and Fuller point out that none of these actions require the introduction of an Alberta health act or a health care charter. What they require is the political will on the part of government to actually prioritize the well-being of Albertans and the system instead of vague declarations and rhetorical statements.

The Parkland Institute is a non-partisan public policy research institute in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Alberta.

Access, Quality and Affordability: Real Health Care Change for Albertans is available on the Parkland Institute web site: www.parklandinstitute.ca, or in hard-copy from the Parkland Institute at 780-492-8558.

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