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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Canada Needs Federal Leadership to Accelerate Health Innovation and Improve System Performance

Ottawa, ON, (Tuesday, December 2, 2014) – Thirty-nine national health-care organizations that comprise the Health Action Lobby (HEAL) issued a consensus statement today calling for the federal government to embrace the *Canadian Way* of addressing national health issues through compassion, consensus, and collaboration.

The Consensus Statement entitled *Accelerating Innovation and Improving Health System Performance* is intended to prompt all federal parties to articulate their own positions on health care for Canadians in advance of the election in 2015. A recent Nanos survey confirmed that Canadians scored health care as a top priority for all political parties in the next federal election as 7.6 on a 10 point scale.

“To secure the future of the health system, HEAL believes that federal leadership is essential – both in areas where it has a clear responsibility, and where it can lead collaboration, innovation and improved system performance along with the provinces and territories”, said Mr. Glenn Brimacombe, HEAL Co-Chair. “We believe the HEAL approach reflects the *Canadian Way*, one that is deeply rooted in compassion, consensus and collaboration.”

The statement identifies a number of ways in which the federal government can play a leadership role in improving the health and health care of Canadians by accelerating the pace of innovation, improving overall accountability and transparency in system performance, and raising the level of collaboration with the provinces and territories, and providers. The statement focuses on six issues:

1. Improved collaboration between the federal government and the provinces and territories.
2. A vision statement for the federal government in health and health care.
3. A performance framework to guide improvements and innovation in health systems and health care delivery.
4. Options for a financially stable health system.

5. The need for strategic, federal investments related to Canada's aging population, access to prescription drugs, and the spread of on-the-ground health innovations.
6. The development of a common set of national health system performance indicators.

The Consensus Statement also identifies a combination of time-limited strategic funds to spur system improvements including a *National Health Innovation Fund* and a *Community-Based Health Infrastructure Fund*.

"Since health care is a top priority for Canadians, and has been very important for the past two decades, HEAL is calling on all federal political parties to clarify their positions on how they would improve the health of Canadians and the care they receive," said, Dr. Karen Cohen, HEAL Co-Chair. According to a recent Nanos survey, 90 percent of respondents said the leadership role the federal government plays in health is important or somewhat important.

HEAL looks forward to working with all levels of government to achieve results for Canadians.

The Consensus Statement is available at www.healthactionlobby.ca.

The complete Nanos survey results can be accessed at www.healthactionlobby.ca or at www.nanosresearch.com.

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HEAL is a coalition of 39 national health and consumer associations and organizations dedicated to protecting and strengthening Canada's health system. Created in 1991, and representing more than 650,000 providers and consumer of health care, the major focus of HEAL's activities has been on the federal role in health and health care.

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The Arthritis Society
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