



**ASSOCIATION CATHOLIQUES
CANADIENNE DE LA SANTÉ**

**CATHOLIC HEALTH
ASSOCIATION OF CANADA**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHAC Calls on Government to Compensate All Who Contracted Hepatitis C from Tainted Blood

Ottawa — The Catholic Health Association of Canada (CHAC) has written to the Prime Minister expressing strong disagreement about the manner in which the federal government is neglecting the needs of all those who have been afflicted by hepatitis C due to failures in the blood safety regulatory systems.

“The CHAC, in union with many other Canadians, strongly urges the federal government to initiate action, with the provincial governments, to provide just, compassionate and prompt compensation for all people who have contracted hepatitis C from tainted blood because of the failure of government to adequately regulate blood safety,” said Gerald Herkel, CHAC Chairperson.

During the past few weeks serious concerns have been raised as federal and provincial politicians have made claims and counterclaims about who is responsible for compensating those who have been afflicted. The public has been given false information and spurious arguments have been put forward to justify a policy decision to limit compensation. The CHAC maintains that the argument that compensation for all will threaten medicare is unfair in that it places those asking for compensation in an adversarial stance with other Canadians. In the meantime, those who are sick continue to be victimized. Compassion, respect and justice are the cornerstones of Canadian culture and the foundation of our health care system. These values must be the governing principles that guide efforts to address the needs of those who have been afflicted by hepatitis C. “We believe that Canadians reject the inherent unfairness of giving help to some of the injured and not to others, based on questionable timelines,” said Mr. Herkel.

In its letter to Mr. Chrétien, the CHAC strongly encourages the federal government to do the right thing by providing compensation for all those who have been afflicted. This is not a time for partisan politics. It is a time for Parliament to speak for the conscience of Canadians who seek only fairness, equity and justice.

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