



ASSOCIATION CATHOLIQUES
CANADIENNE DE LA SANTÉ

CATHOLIC HEALTH
ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHAC CALLS ON NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES TO ADOPT 10 HEALTH POLICIES

Ottawa — At the annual convention of the Catholic Health Association of Canada (CHAC), held in Saint John, N.B., May 3-5, 1997, participants of the Annual Assembly approved a resolution calling all candidates in the federal election campaign, and their political parties, to adopt ten policies related to health and health care in Canada. The resolution calls not only for the endorsement of these policies, but also for a commitment to implement them when Parliament convenes in the fall.

“These policies represent an affirmation of the fundamental values that gave rise to our health system in Canada,” said Kateri Ghesquiere, CSJ, CHAC chairperson. The ten policies were developed in light of value statements taken from a number of CHAC publications.

A. Protection for Medicare

Health care is a social good belonging to all citizens. Universal access to medically necessary services, regardless of the ability to pay, must remain a defining feature of our health care system. — Prescription for a Healthier Canada, 1997

Policies

1. The rejection of any move toward a two-tiered health system in Canada;
2. a pledge to protect Canada’s universal health system and enforce the standards of the Canada Health Act;
3. a commitment to halt cuts in transfer payments under the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST);
4. the establishment of a minimum cash floor of \$12.5 billion for the CHST and a commitment to future funding growth, taking inflation and population growth into account; and
5. a commitment to act on the recommendation of the National Forum on Health to expand Medicare to cover home care and medically necessary drugs.

B. Reinforcement of the Federal Role in Health Care

Government has a leadership role to play in protecting the right of all Canadians to health care. — Prescription for a Healthier Canada, 1997

Policy

1. That the goal of eliminating fiscal debts must not take precedence over universal access to health care and social programs as an overriding guiding principle.

C. Compassionate Care for the Dying

A basic moral test of any society is how the weak are treated. Concerted efforts, therefore, must be made to provide compassionate care for those who are dying. — Integrating Health & Values, 1994

Policies

1. A commitment to promote palliative care services as integral to the health care system;
2. A commitment not to decriminalize euthanasia and assisted suicide.

D. Promotion of Spiritual Care

Spiritual care and support are increasingly recognized as being essential to health and human development. — Spirituality and Health, 1996

Policy

1. That spiritual care be promoted as an essential determinant of health.

E. Action to Address Child Poverty

Society as a whole pays the price of diminished opportunity for each child who does not achieve his/her potential. Addressing child poverty remains one of our country's greatest social challenges. — CHAC Election Package, 1997

Policy

1. A commitment to establish a national child benefit system as part of a long-term comprehensive strategy for tackling child and family poverty to be implemented during the coming fiscal year.

“During the remaining weeks of the election campaign we will be encouraging our members to raise these issues in meetings with candidates and in letters to party leaders,” said Sister Ghesquiere.