



**ASSOCIATION CATHOLIQUES  
CANADIENNE DE LA SANTÉ**

**CATHOLIC HEALTH  
ASSOCIATION OF CANADA**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **CHAC Opposes Softening Legislation on New Reproductive and Genetic Technologies**

Ottawa — The Catholic Health Association of Canada (CHAC) is opposed to suggestions made this week by Health Minister Allan Rock indicating that the government might soften its approach to banning controversial reproductive and genetic technologies.

“Bill C-47, which received second reading in November, 1996, but died on the order paper when the federal election was called in April of this year, represented an important step toward safeguarding such core values as human dignity, respect for life and protection of the vulnerable,” said Kateri Ghesquiere, CSJ, CHAC Chairperson. The CHAC is concerned that the recent comments of the Health Minister reflect a major change in policy concerning new reproductive and genetic technologies.

Four years ago, after very wide consultations and evidence gathering across the country, the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies submitted its report to the government of Canada. That report strongly recommended two things: putting legal limits on the use of these technologies, and setting up a licensing and regulatory body to manage their use. The prohibition of the 13 procedures outlined in Bill C-47 represented an important and necessary response to these technologies, and a determination to protect the dignity and security of Canadians.

“We urge the government to reintroduce Bill C-47 immediately, and to refrain from weakening the prohibitions which this same government, only months ago, stated were necessary to protect the health and values of Canadians,” said Sister Ghesquiere.

Canadians have made it clear, both through representations to the Royal Commission and through Health Canada’s own consultations, that they oppose the commercialization of human reproduction. Moreover, they are looking to the federal government to exercise leadership in managing new reproductive and genetic technologies in a way that protects Canadians from threats to their collective health, and prohibits the use of those technologies that are ethically and socially unacceptable. “Bill C-47 went a long way to achieving these goals and we urge the government not to weaken its commitment to put firm legal limits on the use of these technologies.”