



Catholic  
Health  
Association  
of Canada

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## **Health Accord expands Medicare but ignores dangers of for-profit care – CHAC**

(Ottawa) – The Catholic Health Association of Canada (CHAC) supports the expansion and reform of Medicare as agreed to by the federal and provincial governments in the Accord of February 5. However, the absence of any insistence from the federal government that provinces roll back plans to introduce more for-profit delivery of publicly funded services is a matter of serious concern.

In the Accord, the provinces and the federal government agree to develop a national home care program as part of Medicare (post-acute care, rehab programs, and palliative care), and to cover so-called “catastrophic” drug costs. These are two very important steps in ensuring quality health care for all Canadians. The selection of primary health care reform as one of the areas of target funding is also long overdue.

However, the Accord does not address the negative impact of greater for-profit sector participation in the delivery of publicly funded services, and the increasing commercialization of care.

The problems associated with adopting for-profit delivery and market mechanisms as solutions to the challenges facing the system were clearly identified during the consultations conducted by Roy Romanow in recent months. The CHAC is concerned about a lack of accountability on the part of for-profit providers, and about the impact of these changes that will favour those who can afford to pay for care out of their own pockets, while penalizing the chronically ill, the elderly and those living in poverty.

“The CHAC is also concerned that several provinces continue to maintain that allowing for-profit health care to deliver publicly funded services will relieve the strain on the system, reduce waiting lists, and provide efficiencies that nonprofits cannot match. As Mr. Romanow pointed out in his Final Report, none of these arguments is supported by facts,” said Mrs. Janet Brown, CHAC Chairperson.

On the issue of accountability; it is regrettable that Mr. Romanow’s recommendation to add a sixth principle of accountability to the *Canada Health Act* was not implemented. “It is clear that Canadians are expecting both levels of government to cease the bickering that has dominated federal-provincial health care discussions in recent years, and to develop a clear accountability plan that will deliver real change, lead to better health outcomes, and ensure a sustainable health system in the future,” said Mrs. Brown.

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The Catholic Health Association of Canada (CHAC) is a national Christian association supportive of health care in the tradition of the Catholic Church. As the national voice for Catholic health care, the CHAC acts to promote health in all its aspects: physical, emotional, spiritual and social. Its membership includes seven provincial associations; 34 sponsors/owners of health care organizations; 127 hospitals and homes; health care professionals; and affiliate organizations and individuals.

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