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CATHOLIC HEALTH
ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CHAC Commends Federal Health Minister for Establishing a National Council on Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation

Ottawa - The Catholic Health Association of Canada (CHAC) has written to Health Minister Allan Rock commending him for working with the Provincial and Territorial Health Ministers to establish a national council on organ and tissue donation and transplantation in Canada.

On October 15, Mr. Rock responded to the recommendations on organ and tissue donation and transplantation in Canada made by the Standing Committee on Health. He noted that the Government accepts the recommendations which will form a framework for discussions with the provinces and territories.

In making the announcement, Mr. Rock noted that the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Health Ministers have agreed to establish a National Council on Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation. "We trust that the creation of this national council will lead to the establishment of a coordinated and integrated organ donation and transplantation strategy across Canada," said Mary Pat Skene, CHAC chairperson.

In March of this year, the CHAC presented a brief to the Standing Committee urging the government to create a national transplant program to coordinate organ and tissue donations and transplantations, and to establish national standards.

In its brief to the Standing Committee the CHAC also emphasized that advances in organ donation and transplantation have raised complex ethical issues including - defining death, establishing criteria for "brain death," safeguarding informed consent, weighing the ethics of paying for organs, and creating guidelines for the allocation of organs. "We were pleased, therefore, to see that the principles established to govern the operation of the national strategy call for the inclusion of ethicists on the Council," said Mrs. Skene.

The CHAC is committed to working with its members, and in partnership with other organizations, to increase public awareness of the merits of organ donation.

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