



Catholic
Health
Association
of Canada

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First Ministers' 10-Year Health Plan is Significant Step Forward

(Ottawa) – The First Ministers' health plan makes significant progress in ensuring a stable and secure future for Canada's health system.

“After a long period of uncertainty concerning the future of medicare, the First Ministers' recommitment to the principles of the *Canada Health Act*, and their agreement to establish clinically based wait time targets, invest in health human resources, and expand the continuum of care suggests Canadians can be optimistic about maintaining a publicly funded health system that will be just and equitable,” said Ms. Sandra Keon, CHAC Board Chair.

Under the new \$41-billion agreement, Ottawa will transfer \$18-billion to the provinces for provincial health systems over the next six years, with automatic increases of 6 per cent a year until 2015 to keep up with escalating health costs. Of that 10-year total, \$5.5 billion will be used to reduce waiting times. This significant investment provides the predictable, long term funding that is needed to support health care reform and improved access to the system.

The CHAC is particularly pleased that First Ministers have agreed to expand coverage for end-of-life care. Improved end-of-life care is something that has been long advocated by the CHAC.

Agreement to seek advice from experts and health providers on establishing appropriate indicators to measure health system performance, and to empower the national Health Council to prepare an annual report to all Canadians on health outcomes is another important step toward developing a system that is accountable to Canadians.

The First Ministers' plan does not address the contentious issue concerning the extent to which the private sector should be involved in delivering health care services in Canada. "The federal government did signal, going into the meeting, that stemming the tide of privatization was a priority. The CHAC urges governments to undertake the important task of deciding where the boundaries should be drawn for for-profit involvement in health care delivery. The issue is central to the continued integrity and viability of our health care system," said Ms. Keon.

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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; 24 sponsors/owners of health care organizations; 98 hospitals and long-term care organizations; health care professionals; and affiliate organizations and individuals.

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