

WE CAN'T AFFORD PRIVATE HEALTH CARE



MEDICARE WORKS! KEEP IT PUBLIC. KEEP IT FAIR.

FOR HEALTH, NOT FOR PROFIT

Canadians built a public health care system so that *all people* would have equal access to care. Care based on need. Not on the size of our wallet.

But now, our system is **under attack**. Private companies, from giant insurance corporations to individual entrepreneurs, want to replace Canada's comprehensive, universal public system with a U.S.-style two-tier system *for their own profit*.



COMMERCIAL FORCES ON THE MOVE

The situation is urgent. Financial and corporate sector lobbyists are working hard to commercialize our public system. The Canadian Medical Association is advocating private insurance and more for-profit delivery. Provinces like BC and Quebec are pushing private insurance and for-profit surgical centres and hospitals. And in Ottawa, the Harper government is not enforcing the *Canada Health Act* to stop two-tier care.

Know: Two-tier health care is not a “safety valve”. It siphons scarce doctors and health professionals out of the public system to serve wealthy queue-jumpers, limiting access and increasing wait times for the rest of us. There is **no evidence anywhere** that a two-tier system shortens waiting lists.

Know: In the US, private insurance premiums have almost doubled since 2000, rising by 87%. In the same period, wages rose only 2% after inflation. **Half** of personal bankruptcies are due to medical bills.

Know: Public delivery of health services consistently delivers better results for less money. Private support services, for example cooking and cleaning, have higher staff turnover and are of poorer quality. Corners are cut for company profits, sometimes leading to higher hospital infection rates.

Know: Public health care spending is *not* out of control. It is claiming more of government budgets because tax cuts are reducing government revenue. It's *private* health care spending that is out of control, particularly the skyrocketing costs of brand-name pharmaceuticals.

HEART ATTACK:

Intensive care room:

\$8,000 to \$12,000 per day

Angioplasty:

\$6,000 to \$7,000

ECG:

\$280 to \$360

Coronary heart bypass surgery with cardiac catheterization:

\$40,278 to \$63,558

Defibrillator implant:

\$27,000 to \$35,000*

Average annual insurance premium for family coverage: \$11,480

*Range of prices from US hospital price lists, in US dollars.

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JOIN US

Join your provincial health coalition to advocate innovation and improvement *within the public system*.

ACT

- **Vote public.** Vote for candidates provincially and federally who support public funding *and* public delivery of health care. Support candidates who endorse our 7 ways to make our public system better.
- **Call your MP.** Call your MPP or MLA. **Meet** with them, especially during National Medicare Week, Nov 13-18.
- **Write** letters to the editor. **Phone** local call-in shows.
- **Help get the word out!** Photocopy and distribute this flyer to your friends, faith group, co-workers, seniors' centre, library, barbershop....
- **Join your provincial health coalition.**

Courage my friends, it's not too late to build a better world.

-Tommy Douglas



www.medicare.ca

7 WAYS TO MAKE OUR PUBLIC SYSTEM BETTER

Anybody running for political office should study this list:

- ✓ **Recruit and retain more health care professionals in the public system.** Doctors should be banned from working both systems – this leads to longer wait times in the public system.
- ✓ **Fix wait time problems *within* the public system.** Manage wait lists better. Boost capacity by strengthening services in existing hospitals and building more innovative *public* hospitals and clinics.
- ✓ **Extend Medicare to include prescription drugs.** This would deliver savings to provincial governments and deliver safe and cost-effective drug therapies to more Canadians.
- ✓ **Stop contracting out hospital support services.** Keeping them public is key to healthier patients and cleaner facilities.
- ✓ **Improve the overall structure of health care delivery.** Let's reform front-line health care, deliver more public homecare, and create more public community health and long-term care facilities.
- ✓ **Keep people healthy in the first place.** Reduce poverty, poor nutrition and other “social determinants” of ill-health.
- ✓ **Enforce the Canada Health Act and stop two-tier health care.** Build on the successes of public health insurance programs and not-for-profit delivery. Two-tier care takes money away from patients and turns it into profits.

PROVINCIAL HEALTH COALITIONS

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