

## Made-in-Canada health care solutions

“We can solve medicare’s apparently intractable problems with innovation. We can modernize medicare with public finance and non-profit delivery....As the problems wane, so will the demand that we change the basic values upon which we established medicare.”

— *Dr. Michael Rachlis, Author of Prescription for Excellence: How Innovation is saving Canada’s Health Care System*

### BY THE NUMBERS:

**75%**

*reduction in wait time between having a mammogram and diagnosis of breast cancer in Sault Ste. Marie breast health centre. Same patients with an abnormal mammogram receive their ultrasound and biopsy the same day.*

**45,000**

*number of new health professionals hired in Great Britain between 2002 and 2004. This is the main reason for a drop in wait times.*

**Half**

*of the doctors in Canada are family physicians, and there are no user fees to see them. In the United States, only 13% are family docs. Canadians have better access to primary care.*

**Only 7 of 100**

*patients at a community health centre who see a nurse practitioner need a doctor’s consultation.*

**1920**

*more cardiac surgeries were performed each year when Ontario implemented the comprehensive Cardiac Care Network.*

**76%**

*of callers to Info-Sante, Quebec’s telephone healthy line said that they would have gone to the Emergency room or doctor’s office. Instead they got the advice they needed over the phone.*

### Canadians want public health care improved, not dismantled. **Privatization isn’t the answer.**

Canada’s public health care is providing quality care for all its citizens, but there are problems we need to solve to improve and expand it.

The people who want to privatize our health services say that allowing a parallel for-profit private system to exist beside our public health care is the solutions.

Privatization isn’t the solution. In fact, it will cost more, give us less and make it worse.

### **The myth of the European Model.**

The privatizers also say that health care in Europe can provide a fix for our health care. They call it the European Model.

In fact, there is no “European Model.” It’s a myth promoted by those who will benefit from selling for-profit health services. There are many different systems in Europe, each with their own problems and benefits.

Countries with doctors that operate in both systems have longer, not shorter wait times. There is no evidence that a parallel for-profit/public system would solve a single one of the problems in our health care system. Where it has been tried, it hasn’t worked.

### **Canada is developing Made-in-Canada solutions for our public health care problems.**

All across the country there are important innovations that are solving the problems in our public health care. These solutions are reducing wait times, cutting costs, improving access to family doctors and specialists, reducing shortages of health professionals and keeping health care affordable.

These solutions in the public health care system also maintain the values and principles of our health care system – values that guarantee that everyone gets access to quality health care, regardless of their ability to pay.

It’s the Canadian way to improved and expanded public health care for all of us.

Innovation in our public health care is the key to improving and expanding Canada’s health care.

## Here are some innovations already underway:

- The **Alberta Bone and Joint Clinic** improved the process of handling joint replacements to reduce consultation waiting times by 85%, slashed surgery wait times by 97% and cut length of hospital stay to 4.3 days from 6.2 days.
- The **Somerset Community Health Centre** in Ottawa uses nurse practitioners to serve patients who need same-day appointments. 93% of the patients don't need to see a doctor.
- **Ontario's Cardiac Care Network** brought regional coordination and continuous quality improvements to heart surgery. Patients across the province are triaged by medical need. The number of cardiac surgeries has increased by a third, and the length of hospital stays decreased.
- In **Victoria, B.C.**, a Quick Response Team works with hospitals to provide the home and medical help needed to keep seniors and others from being admitted to hospital when they could be cared for at home. The process is now being used in other cities across the country, saving millions in hospital costs.



## How do we encourage innovation?

- **Stop privatizing health care.** Not only will we pay more and get less, private for-profit services are interested in profit, not innovation. The only real solutions will be found in the public health care system.
- **Improve health care delivery.** Encourage team work and community clinics; bring together the many steps in prevention, treatment and diagnosis; use the skills of all health care professionals; incorporate electronic record-keeping; use new technologies; put the patient at the centre of care.
- **Train and recruit more health professionals.** Open up nursing and medical schools; use the skills of all health professionals, to ease doctor shortages. Stop privatization to encourage "poaching" of health professionals by for-profit services.
- **Fix wait times.** This starts with reliable research to see what wait times really are. Often just rethinking how things are done brings about dramatic change; e.g. encourage single queue for surgeries; establish public surgical clinics with all services in one place; use nurse-practitioners to manage chronic disease.
- **Prevent illness and manage chronic disease.** Chronic disease accounts for 60% of all health care costs. Improved management of chronic disease and a focus on prevention will dramatically lower health care costs.

### About the Canadian Health Coalition:

The Canadian Health Coalition is a not-for-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to protecting and expanding Canada's public health system for the benefit of all Canadians. It includes organizations representing seniors, women, churches, nurses, health care workers and anti-poverty activists from across Canada. For more information: [www.medicare.ca](http://www.medicare.ca)

