



CANADIAN
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OF NURSES
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Dear Premiers,

On behalf of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, I am writing to share our disappointment in the federal government's decision to declare, rather than negotiate, the federal funding contribution to public health care on December 19th. We urge you to work with your provincial colleagues to develop a national consensus on priority areas for improving population health, providing better care and bending the health care cost curve in ways that do not jeopardize patient care.

Health and health care are top priorities for Canadians. We need a national agreement on a plan of action going forward for health and health care. There are disparities in Canada in regards to health, quality of care and breadth of coverage. Without a national agreement, with a strong federal role, we believe these disparities will deepen, further widening the gap between the haves and have-nots. We also believe that it is only with a federal government contribution of approximately 25% of health care spending will we be able to maintain comparable quality systems while improving value for money. Canadians expect comparability in service wherever they live and no matter how much they earn.

A strong federal presence does not mean intrusion or micromanagement. It is not a question of jurisdictions accounting to Ottawa; it is about all governments being accountable to their citizens. Ottawa has an obligation to fund, lead, aspire, and inspire in pursuit of creating the best health care system in the world. It should promote the search for common ground, efficiencies, coordination, and mutual learning. All of us have an obligation to keep it that way.

The system is in danger only when we tolerate or even foster fragmentation, where programs, institutions, and provinces compete against rather than learn, coordinate and integrate. We need cooperation to ensure that every health care worker, every program, every facility, and every jurisdiction gets better at what they do every day.

If we value prevention, self-management, and avoidable health breakdown, we cannot define productivity solely in terms of activity and volumes of services. If we want better communication with patients and integrated, team-based care, we must rethink how we fund organizations and pay doctors. If we judge ourselves and our system by how well it serves the disadvantaged, we will have to match the last decade's investments in technology and procedures with a decade's worth of investment in home, long-term and community care, and chronic disease management. If we want to expand public drug coverage - where Canada trails virtually every advanced nation - we must revolutionize the quality of prescribing, pay

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reasonable but not exorbitant prices for patented drugs, and put the needs of Canadians before the profits of pharmaceutical industry shareholders. This preferred future demands that we change how we think about health care goals, responsibilities, funding, and delivery.

Canada's nurses want to work with you to ensure that your efforts to innovate are guided by the principles of the *Canada Health Act*, which have been elaborated on by the Canadian Nurses Association and the Canadian Medical Association in their document, *Principles to Guide Health Transformation in Canada*. These principles have been organized according to the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's Triple Aim framework which describe the three goals of "better care, better health and lower per capita costs".

You often hear that defenders of public health care are advocates of the status quo. As frontline care providers, I can tell you we are not in favour of the status quo. As patient advocates we are in favour of a transformation agenda based on principles and supported by evidence demonstrating value for money.

The ending of the current Health Accord in 2014 has reopened a national discussion on health care and health care transformation. Minister Flaherty cannot unilaterally stop these important discussions. We can change things for the better, if we work together.

We welcome a meeting at any time.

Sincerely,

Linda Silas

[Signature]
MO President