

07 April 2014

The Honourable Rona Ambrose
Minister of Health
Health Canada
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Canada

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Re: Canada Health Accord

Dear Minister Ambrose,

I am writing to ask about the future of public health care in Canada now that Canada's Health Accord has not been renewed.

The Canadian Council of Churches is the largest ecumenical body in Canada, now representing 25 churches of Anglican, Eastern and Roman Catholic, Evangelical, Free Church, Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, and Historic Protestant traditions; this is 85% of Christians in Canada who profess adherence to a church.

The Canadian Council of Churches has a long history of engagement on the issue of public health care in Canada, notably during the Senate and House consultations during the Romanow Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada. That engagement led to a proposed *Health Care Covenant for all Canadians*, a copy of which is attached, and was referenced in the opening sections of the Romanow Report on the *Future of Health Care in Canada*.

Indeed churches in Canada have a much longer centuries long history of establishing health care facilities, providing health care, and advocating for a strong public health care system in Canada. A useful essay on churches and health care in Canada called *Charter and Covenant: The Churches and the Struggle for Public Health Care in Canada* is also attached.

It is from this context of long-term engagement by churches on health care issues in Canada that I ask these questions:

1. Is the federal government committed to a publicly-funded, universally accessible health care system based upon need rather than ability to pay?
2. Without renewing the 2014 Health Accord, how will the federal government guarantee access to health services for all Canadians, regardless of geography and ability to pay?

3. How will the federal government and its partners carry out national planning and coordination, and evaluate progress of the health care system's goals when funding for the Health Council of Canada is ended?
4. What study has been done to evaluate the impact on the health of Canadians and the health care system from the decision to decrease the escalator to 3% per annum and to eliminate the equalization portion of the transfer payments?

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to hearing from you. We continue to pray for you, the Prime Minister, and the Government of Canada as you address your responsibilities.



The Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton
General Secretary

Cc: Libby Davies, Health Critic, New Democratic Party of Canada
Hedy Fry, Health Critic, Liberal Party of Canada
André Bellavance, Health Critic, Bloc Québécois
Elizabeth May, Green Party of Canada
Major Jim Champ, President, The Canadian Council of Churches

The Canadian Council of Churches is the largest ecumenical body in Canada, now representing 25 churches of Anglican, Eastern and Roman Catholic, Evangelical, Free Church, Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, and Historic Protestant traditions. We are one of the few ecumenical bodies in the world that includes such a range of Christian churches. The Canadian Council of Churches was founded in 1944.