

Harper must act on Federal Wait Times Report

Promising Canadians reduced wait times, without promising to solve, within the public system, the ongoing issues that create wait times, is setting the public system up for failure. No strategy to reduce wait times and improve access in Canada's health care system will succeed without a plan to stop privatization of delivery. Since health care practitioners can't be in more than one place at the same time, creating a parallel private, for-profit system will simply take much-needed doctors, nurses and radiologists out of our public hospitals. A parallel for-profit system will only provide better access to the wealthy.

Wait time guarantees have been tried and abandoned in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark because they failed. The federal government should encourage public solutions to wait time problems, including better management and coordination of wait lists, and long-term investments in human health resources and capital infrastructure. The only health care guarantee that matters is the one recommended by the Romanow Commission: a long-term federal government commitment that is built on Canadian values "to transform Medicare into a system that is more responsive, comprehensive and accountable to all Canadians."

About the federal advisor's report on wait times:

The Report of the Federal Advisor on Wait Times provides a roadmap to fix wait time problems in the public system. Québec's decision to adopt a care guarantee and open the door to a two-tier delivery system will seriously damage the public system. According to the Postl Report, the solution is system change to produce better management of wait lists, better use of human resources, and accelerated implementation of electronic health records. Postl's Report also stressed that physicians need to shift from individual contributions to team involvement and problem solving, and better prevention.

Dr. Postl's recommendations include:

Health human resources:

We must increase the number of spaces in nurse and doctor programs, and promote innovative use of health human resources by maximizing the use of skills that various health professionals have acquired;

Improved management and innovation:

This includes the use of single common waiting lists and primary health care reform;

Electronic health records:

We must accelerate implementation of system-wide electronic health record for all Canadians;

Professional Roles and Responsibilities:

Physicians need to shift from individual contributions to team involvement and problem solving, and team-based care; and

Cinderella diseases:

Care must be taken to transform the system so that the efficiencies are experienced across our health care systems and not just within the five areas in which benchmarks have been set.

Download the Postl report at: <http://www.healthcoalition.ca/postl-report.pdf>



Harper's care 'guarantee' a privatization scheme



No two-tier!

Fix Wait Times in the Public System

