

Canadian Pensioners Concerned Inc.

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Canadian Pensioners Concerned Responds to Romanow Commission Report

Canadian Pensioners Concerned joins with many other organizations to commend the thoughtful and persuasive Report "Building on Values: The Future of Health Care in Canada" presented by Commissioner Roy Romanow on Thursday, November 28, 2002.

Clearly, he has heard the voice of the people, that vast majority of Canadians who believe that Medicare belongs to everyone: as a right when we are in need and as a responsibility when others are in need. Health care is not a commodity to be bartered in the competitive market and should not be further eroded through the growing presence of "for profit" providers particularly in the area of diagnostic services, the imposition of user fees and the further development of a two-tier system.

In response Mr. Romanow has given us a vision and a plan for a strengthened Health Care system. He calls for increased funding with clear accountability on how the money should be spent and the removal of health care dollars from the block funding of the CHST. We support this policy approach.

On the issue of prescription drugs, we support Mr. Romanow's call for a national drug formulary and a thorough review of the regulations that needlessly delay the entry of lower priced generic drugs onto the market after the twenty year patents have expired. However, we believe that Mr. Romanow did not go far enough when he suggested that individuals should pay for the first \$1500 of drug costs. Low income people cannot afford such costs. All citizens should be covered for the cost of medically necessary prescription drugs.

As seniors, we are pleased to see the Commissioner recommending an expansion of health care coverage to Home Care and Palliative Care. However, we are sorry that he did not tackle the terrible situation of people living with disabilities and chronic illnesses who require long term care. This is an area that must be addressed with great urgency.

On the issue of health care, we think it is now time for provincial authorities to set aside their very provincially limited outlooks. On this issue we do not think of ourselves as Ontarians or Manitobans or as citizens of any of the provinces or territories but as Canadians. A strong Federal leadership role in health care is an obvious necessity and responsibility under the terms of the Canada Health Act. We call on the First Ministers and Ministers of Health across the country to move quickly to implement the Romanow Recommendations. This will be a vital first step in bringing our medicare system back into meeting the needs of all Canadians

Founded in 1969, Canadian Pensioners Concerned is a national, voluntary, membership-based, nonpartisan organization of mature Canadians committed to preserving and enhancing a humanitarian vision of life for all citizens of all ages.

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