

At the CMA: In **support** of public health care

The Council of Canadians is in Vancouver August 19 to 22 at the Canadian Medical Association's annual general meeting to encourage doctors to protect public health care, Canada's most valued social program. Public health care is more efficient, it costs less and it provides equal care and access to all Canadians.

Working with allies

The Council of Canadians will be speaking out against the ideas promoted by incoming CMA president Dr. Brian Day, who is a private, for-profit clinic owner and outspoken advocate of health care privatization. We will join with allies from the BC Health Coalition, the Canadian Health Coalition, the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, the Hospital Employees Union, the BC Nurses Union and other groups to hold public events, provide educational materials to the public and to doctors, and speak to the media at this important meeting.



Support the second stage

We will be encouraging doctors to support a national pharmacare program, long-term care and home care strategies for all Canadians, as part of the "second stage" of Medicare. But we will also be encouraging doctors to support the principles of the first stage of medicare as envisioned by Tommy Douglas, CBC's proclaimed "greatest Canadian." In his vision for national health care, Tommy Douglas wanted all Canadians to have access to health care, regardless of their ability to pay.

For more information about the Council of Canadians' Profit is Not The Cure campaign, visit our website at www.profitisnotthecure.ca, or call us toll free at 1-800-387-7177.

Public solutions to wait times

Wait times can be dealt with in the public system. There are examples all across the country of how wait times can be shortened for patients simply by doing things differently. Creating centralized waiting lists, consolidating services and tests into one location and establishing dedicated operating rooms are all ways changes have been made in the public system.

Federal government must enforce Canada Health Act

Finally, the Council of Canadians is calling on the federal government to enforce the letter and the spirit of the Canada Health Act. In British Columbia alone there are more than 70 private, for-profit clinics are now allowed to operate.

We believe that the majority of Canadians want the federal government, with the assistance of provincial governments, to clamp down on private, for-profit clinics that violate the letter and spirit of the Canada Health Act. Federal Health Minister Tony Clement and Prime Minister Stephen Harper should be standing up for public health care, as they promised to do in the 2006 federal election campaign.

As Canada's largest citizen advocacy organization, the Council of Canadians is in Vancouver to let the public and CMA delegates know that profit is not the cure for Canada's public health care system.

