



Canadian Doctors for Medicare
340 Harbord Street, Toronto, Ontario, M6G 1H4



BC Health Coalition
202-211 Georgia Street East, Vancouver, BC V6A 1Z6



July 17, 2012

Honorable Christy Clark, Premier
Room 337, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C., V8V 1X4

Dear Premier Clark,

We are writing this letter in advance of the July 25-27 Council of the Federation meeting in Halifax to express our abiding commitment to a renegotiated federal-provincial Health Accord in 2014, and to ask for your commitment to the same.

Canadian Doctors for Medicare, the BC Health Coalition and the Council of Canadians share a grave concern that the absence of federal leadership undermines the principles upheld by the Canada Health Act, shatters the potential of the Health Accord to foster a sustainable and better performing public health care system, and puts inordinate pressure on the premiers to reform and improve public health care at a critical time.

It is our shared belief that the Health Accord must unconditionally be renegotiated in 2014. It is an opportunity to keep leadership in your hands while building on the successes achieved in 2004, and directing funding to what our health system needs most, such as innovative primary care reform that connects patients to collaborative community care, a national home and community care strategy to keep patients out of hospital, and bulk purchasing of pharmaceuticals that will ensure a steady supply while saving Canadians and provincial insurance plans up to \$10.7 billion annually.

These are some of the innovative public solutions our health care system needs. However, we are concerned that the scope of such reforms is too great for the provinces to adequately address

without collaboration, federal partnership, and the performance measures called for by Minister Aglukkaq in her December 2011 letter. Without Ottawa's coordination, Canadian health care will become more costly, increasingly fragmented, and for-profit medicine will continue to grow.

We are further concerned that health economists, policy experts, citizen and professional associations were excluded from the Council of the Federation's consultation process. It is critical that the best advice from experts be used to sustain and improve our public health care system.

Given the change in the funding escalator in 2016, we have a big task ahead of us to reform public health care to make it better serve British Columbians and all Canadians, and to keep it sustainable. Doing so is a big task – one that requires the involvement of the federal government.


We want our elected representatives to look to the many solutions in our public health care system that will create better care for all Canadians. We believe that the renewal of the Health Accord is an essential step towards better health care in Canada. In that spirit, we urge you to represent the needs of British Columbians and all Canadians by calling on Prime Minister Harper to return to the table and work with premiers on a 2014 Health Accord.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Dr. Vanessa Brcic
Executive Board Member, Canadian Doctors for Medicare



Rachel Tutte
Co-chair, BC Health Coalition



Ava Waxman
Council of Canadians BC/Yukon Regional Office

CC:

Hon. Michael de Jong, B.C. Minister of Health
Adrian Dix, Leader, B.C. Opposition
Mike Farnworth, B.C. Opposition Critic for Health
Hon. Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health
Right Hon. Stephen Harper, Prime Minister
Thomas Mulcair, Leader of the Official Opposition
Libby Davies, Opposition Critic for Health