

news release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Public health care advocates call on Premier Clark to commit to a renegotiated federal-provincial health accord

Joint letter sent to Premier Clark in advance of July 25-27 Council of the Federation meeting in Halifax warns that public health care will suffer without Ottawa's coordination

The BC Health Coalition, Canadian Doctors for Medicare and the Council of Canadians are urging Premier Clark to work with her provincial counterparts to call the federal government to the health care negotiating table.

The groups are concerned that Canadian health care will become increasingly fragmented and costly without leadership and investment from Ottawa and have called for a renegotiated federal-provincial health accord. The current accord expires in 2014.

"If the provinces work together to get the federal government to the negotiating table, they can get down to the work of creating a new accord and building a caring future for health care in Canada," said BC Health Coalition co-chair Rachel Tutte, who cited Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's unilateral December 2011 announcement that annual increases in federal health transfers would be cut by up to 50 per cent as evidence of Ottawa's unwillingness to work with the provinces.

"The absence of federal leadership shatters the potential of a renewed 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," said Dr. Vanessa Brcic of Canadian Doctors for Medicare, who warned that the health care working groups struck by the provinces last January will likely be unable to effectively coordinate the information sharing required to improve access, quality and efficiency.

"It is our shared belief that the health accord must unconditionally be renegotiated in 2014 in order to build on the successes achieved by the 2004 accord, and direct future funding to the priority areas our health care system needs most," said Ava Waxman of the Council of Canadians.

The letter to Clark comes in advance of a July 18 National Day of Action for a 2014 Health Accord. Communities across BC will come together to demand that Premier Clark make sure that Ottawa remains committed to working with the provinces in the coming year.

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View the joint letter to Premier Clark: <http://bit.ly/Pe3vy2>

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