

Ecumenical Health Care Network



a project of the Commission on Justice & Peace
of the Canadian Council of Churches

Thursday, October 24, 2002

The Hon Anne McLellan
Minister of Health
House of Commons
Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
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Dear Minister McLellan,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Ecumenical Health Care Network, an initiative of the Canadian Council of Churches' Commission on Justice and Peace.

Members of our Commission take a deep interest in the current discussions about the future of health care in Canada. Many of our members and affiliated organizations are involved in the provision of health care services. We are also actively participating in public discussions about preserving and expanding services and forms of care in our health care system, including homecare and pharmacare. We do not believe that expanding the role of the for-profit private sector is a viable solution in ensuring a sustainable health care system. Our members support the five principles of the Canada Health Act.

In October last year, the Commission submitted a brief to the Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. We hosted a churches' forum on health care in the West Block this past February. Between January and April of this year we held 18 workshops across Canada with members of our denominations to discuss the future of health care and to encourage participation in the Royal Commission. In May, the Commission submitted a brief to Commissioner Romanow. One outcome of this consultative process was *A Health Care Covenant for All People in Canada*.

We were encouraged by the references to health care in the Speech from the Throne and concur with the statement that "no issue touches Canadians more deeply than health care. Our health care system is a practical expression of the values that define us as a country. Of the willingness of Canadians to share risk and accept responsibility for one another".

We support the view that "the Canada we want cannot happen by government acting alone or by citizens acting apart..." We are most interested in discussing how you envision addressing the recommendations in Mr. Romanow's report and whether there will be opportunities for Canadians to continue to be involved in the follow-up to the Report.

There are specific issues of concern to our members concerning health care. We would be interested in discussing with you how *A Health Care Covenant for All People in Canada* might be helpful as an expression of the values we share as Canadians.

On behalf of our members, I am writing to request a meeting with you before Christmas or in January. It is our hope that such a meeting might ensure that churches and faith groups generally, may play a constructive role in this important discussion. I am enclosing our briefs to the Senate Committee and to the Romanow Commission.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Allen
Chair,
Commission on Justice & Peace
Canadian Council of Churches

Enclosures:

- *Health Care Covenant for All People in Canada*
- Submission to the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, submitted by the Ecumenical Health Care Network of the Commission on Justice and Peace, Canadian Council of Churches on October 29, 2001
- Submission to the Commission on the Future of Health Care In Canada, submitted by the Ecumenical Health Care Network of the Commission on Justice and Peace, Canadian Council of Churches on May 28, 2002