



Protecting, Strengthening,  
and Expanding Public Health Care



## Canada's Health Coalition's Joint Statement on the Bilateral Health Deals

Canada's universal health care system requires federal vision and federal leadership. A health accord should unite the country in recommitting to our shared vision, encourage the scaling up of best practices, and implementing national standards to ensure that no matter where Canadians live they can access high quality public health care on equitable terms for all based on our health system's foundational principles of equity and compassion.

Given the current state of negotiations between the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, we, Canada's national, provincial and territorial health coalitions are deeply concerned about the future of our universal, single-tier public health care system. The declining share of federal funding for health care, included in the bilateral agreements that have been negotiated to date, not only increases fiscal pressures on provinces that will therefore face significantly increased pressure to cut needed public health care services, but it also reduces the authority of the federal government in upholding national standards that protect Canadians from user fees and extra-billing. Bilateral agreements threaten the portability of medicare leaving a patchwork system where some services are public in some provinces or territories but not in others.

We are appalled with Saskatchewan's announcement that they've been given one-year to violate the Canada Health Act by continuing to allow two-tiered health care through privatized for-profit MRI scans. It is imperative that the Federal government uphold the Canada Health Act and enact financial penalties to Canada Health Transfer payments to Saskatchewan and any other province that fails to protect its residents from user fees for needed health care levied by private clinics.

A health accord is an opportunity for governments to come together to make our system more comprehensive and fair by expanding public health care to cover critical areas like prescription medication and seniors care for everyone.

This requires federal leadership and cooperation. Bilateral agreements are no way to build and promote an equitable national vision and move it forward.

We are calling on the federal, provincial, territorial and First Nations governments to return to the negotiating table.

To safeguard public health care for all, the federal government must agree to pay their fair share, and commit to meeting the real costs of health care. This requires at least a 5.2% Canada Health Transfer escalator.

To strengthen public health care, the federal, provincial, territorial, and First Nations governments must reaffirm their commitment to the Canada Health Act.

Strings must be tied to the CHT so that all dollars for public health care are spent on public health care.

National standards need to be implemented so people across Canada can access the same high quality public health care services with reduced wait times.

To expand public health care, the federal government must work with everyone to create a National Public Drug Plan and a seniors' care plan.

A health accord should be seen as an opportunity to protect, strengthen and expand our public health care system for all.