

Ontario Health Coalition

MEDIA
RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **Attention: Assignment Editors**

What doesn't the CD Howe Institute get about who pays for health care?"demands Health Coalition coordinator, Natalie Mehra

(Toronto) - "The CD Howe Institute appears to have overlooked a basic truth about the Canadian health care system," says Ontario Health Coalition provincial coordinator, Natalie Mehra.

The institute today said that "Users of health care services should pay part of the cost," as they announced the release of a new study.

"They appear unaware that health care users in Canada already support the entire cost of health care through their taxes or through out-of-pocket payments," says Mehra. "The Institute appear to propose that there be an additional tax levy for the sick and that health care users pay for services for health care as a consumer commodity."

"It appears that the CD Howe institute, despite its ability to draw on the services of a number of outstanding scholars and thinkers, has dropped the ball in trying to pretend that health care users are somehow unconnected to the cost of health care. They seem to have fallen victim to the deliberate confusion which a number of political institutions and private health care corporations have introduced into the health care debate."

Here are a few basics drawn from research or common sense which the Institute may wish to include in their considerations.:

- 1. Canada's government health care is a way of pooling our resources to buy in bulk.
- 2. Commodification of health services introduces a host of additional costs: advertising, lobbying, administration and needless duplication.

- 3. Compared to the cost of health care in the USA, our system of the single payer is far more efficient, so that point for point, more of the Canadian health care dollar goes into health care.
- 4. Introducing private health care provides no benefit other than to the persons who profit from investing in it.
- 5. Privately owned, for profit hospitals are less efficient and more expensive than are public, not for profit hospitals.
- 6. Canada decided on publicly financed medicare as being the fairest for all citizens. By pooling our risk and resources across the largest group possible, we are able to provide good health care for every citizen as long as the political will exists.

"I would be delighted to arrange for health care researchers to meet with representatives of the institute to assist them in their future endeavours," Mehra said.

The Ontario Health Coalition's members have recently started the Ontario Campaign to Save National Medicare. The campaign will climax on May 15 with province-wide activities. To date, across Ontario, volunteers are going door-to door wrapping over 50 municipalities in red ribbon proclaiming the campaign to save medicare. To date, over 20 municipal councils have passed resolutions of support for the campaign.

The Ontario Health Coalition represents 300 member groups: community health coalitions, organizations which represent health care workers at all levels, public and private sector unions, social development agencies, women's groups, seniors' groups, low income and homeless people's organizations, ethnic and multiracial minorities' groups and other citizens' groups.