

# Ontario Health Coalition

MEDIA  
RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **Attention: Assignment Editors**

## Over One Hundred Thousand So Far Have Signed "Yes" for Public Medicare: Coalition to Romanow

Toronto - The Ontario and Toronto Health Coalitions presented Health Commissioner Roy Romanow with a massive pile of paper this morning. The paper contained thousands of signatures from Ontarians calling for the maintenance and extension of Canada's Public Medicare system. So far, the Ontario Health Coalition has counted more than 100,000 signatures gathered by local coalitions and volunteers over the last two months.

As coalition members handed over pile after pile of petitions, Sung Hak Cho made a passionate appeal to the Commissioner. Identifying herself as a new Canadian of Korean descent, she demanded that he work to preserve the values and equity that make Canada a better place to live than many others. She was joined by Maria Antonieta Smith who spoke of Toronto's spanish community efforts to protect and strengthen Public Medicare. Ethel Meade from the Older Women's Network spoke of seniors' memories of life before Medicare and the involvement of the seniors' organizations in the movement to protect and extend it. Roy Romanow responded to coalition members by recognizing the work of the thousands of volunteers who have been collecting the signatures. He declared that the support by so many for Public Medicare as shown by the petitions would be noted by the Commission. No new information or evidence of the leaning or direction of the Commission was disclosed.

The petitions have been collected as part of a drive by volunteers working with local health coalitions across the province. Door-to-door thousands of volunteers have reached approximately 1/4 million households to gather support for National Public Medicare. In over 53 cities in Ontario, lawn signs and red ribbon are popping up as symbols of Ontarians, strong desire to protect and strengthen Public Medicare. Over 57 municipalities have passed resolutions supporting the coalitions' goals.

Petitions, in English, Portuguese, French, Korean and other languages were handed over to the Commissioner. The petitions call for the following:

We, the undersigned, ask you to recommend in your final report:

- That our health care system be publicly funded, administered and delivered
- That profit-making be kept out of our health care system
- That Primary Care be re-organised into teams of health care professionals serving the needs of and accountable to their communities
- That Home & Long Term Care and Pharmacare be covered by Medicare
- That the Federal Government increase and stabilise its funding for Medicare
- That the Federal Government take a leadership role in the building of healthy communities and a healthy environment as central to a healthy population.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION: 416-441-2502**