

Dear CMA delegate:

We are joining you at your annual general meeting in Vancouver on behalf of our members from across the country. We are here to ask that you continue to act in the best interests of your patients by reinforcing the need for a strong public health care system that provides equal care and access to all Canadians.

Unfortunately, with the release of the CMA's recent policy paper *Medicare Plus: Toward a Sustainable Publicly Funded Health Care System in Canada*, the CMA has shown its intention to support and promote the use of private, for-profit health care, private insurance and allowing doctors to work in both the private and public systems. We urge you, as delegates, to debate these proposals as they will have serious impacts and repercussions for your patients. Profits and private interests should never come before care.

We encourage you to support a national pharmacare program, long-term care and home care strategies for all Canadians, as part of the "second stage" of Medicare. But in doing so, please also remember how important it is to support the principles of the first stage of medicare which removes the financial barriers to accessing health care.

At the CMA meeting, you will be expected to look at a different hospital funding model – one that includes public hospitals competing with private, for-profit clinics. The B.C. government has been working with incoming CMA President Dr. Brian Day – a private, for-profit clinic owner - on this idea and if it is embraced, British Columbia will be moving one step closer to allowing people to pay their way to the front of the health care line. Private, for-profit clinics have higher administration costs and use public money to pay for shareholder profits. These clinics also take much-needed doctors, nurses and other health care staff away from the public system, leading to longer waiting times. We urge you not to support this funding model.

Wait times can be dealt with in the public system. There are examples all across the country of how wait times can be shortened for patients simply by doing things differently. Creating centralized waiting lists, consolidating services and tests into one location and establishing dedicated operating rooms are all ways changes have been made in the public system.

In this booklet you will find information on the above-mentioned topics. We hope you take the time to read it and raise these important issues with other delegates. As Canada's largest citizen advocacy organization, the Council of Canadians is here in Vancouver to demonstrate that profit is not the cure for Canada's public health care system.

For more information about the Council of Canadians' Profit is Not The Cure campaign, visit our website at www.profitisnotthecure.ca, or call us toll free at 1-800-387-7177.

Sincerely,

The Council of Canadians

