

# Medicare: Accountable... Accessible... Public.



## *Ethical health care means all will have access*

Public health care matters to Canadians. We take pride in our Medicare system and place great importance on protecting a system that provides full access to high quality care.

Unfortunately, years of deep cuts and poor enforcement of the Canada Health Act have taken their toll.

A Supreme Court ruling on health care released last June in Quebec is believed by some to have opened the door to greater privatization. In releasing the Chaoulli decision, the Supreme Court ruled that the Quebec government could not stop patients from paying for private insurance for procedures also provided under Medicare. They justified this because long waiting times can cause undue hardship.

However, a two-tiered health system will not solve the problem of excessive waiting periods. In fact, Canadians are more likely to find themselves waiting longer to get the care they need.

Studies undertaken in countries with parallel public and private systems have shown that the introduction of private service delivery has *increased* waiting times for those waiting for public services. In Australia, England and New Zealand, countries which have parallel public and private systems, patients now face longer waiting periods than those who live where a national public system is in place.

Private clinics drain resources from the public system. In a system where there is already a shortage of doctors and nurses we can not afford to lose more medical professionals to private practice.

Canada needs a strategy that will provide a long term solution to the problem of unreasonable waiting times. We need a strategy to recruit and train more nurses and doctors to work within the public health care system in every province and territory. Most of all, we need a plan that keeps Medicare out of the hands of corporate interests.

## **Ask the candidates**

What will your government do to ensure reasonable wait times while also ensuring accessible, accountable health for all who live in Canada?

What concrete steps will your government take to recruit and retain doctors and other health care practitioners in the public system?



Public Service Alliance of Canada  
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