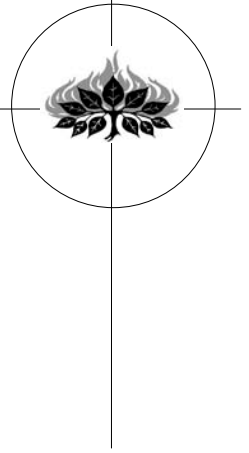


The Presbyterian Church in Canada L'Église presbytérienne au Canada



MODERATOR OF THE 135TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
The Rev. A. Harvey Self, B.A., M. Div.

Wednesday, November 11, 2009

The Hon. Leona Aglukkaq, PC, MP
Minister of Health,
House of Commons,
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Aglukkaq,

I bring you greetings on behalf of the 135th General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada which met in June 7-12, 2009 in Hamilton. The General Assembly is the highest decision-making court of our church.

The General Assembly considered and adopted a report regarding homecare and catastrophic drug coverage. The Presbyterian Church in Canada supports a national home care program and a national pharmacare program.

The agreements reached in the 2003 Accord on Health Care Renewal and the subsequent 2004 Accord (Ten Year Plan to Strengthen Health Care) which expanded on the 2003 Accord showed great promise.

First Ministers defined the basket of services for publicly funded homecare which included two weeks of care following discharge from the hospital, two weeks of home care services for mental health needs and end-of-life care. Public coverage was to be available by 2006. In early 2007, provincial and territorial health ministers reported that steps had been taken towards fulfilling their commitments. There appears to be uneven progress and uneven reporting by the provinces and territories.

What funding is the Government of Canada allocating to assist the provinces and territories meet their commitments in homecare as agreed upon in the 2004 Accord and what progress is being made by the provinces and territories in meeting these commitments?

The fastest growing share of the health care dollar is pharmaceuticals. A report by the Health Council of Canada in 2008 indicated that in 2006, one in twelve Canadians said they had not filled a prescription or had missed a prescription because of financial cost.

The 2004 Accord included federal funds to expand on some aspects of the 2003 Accord including coverage for catastrophic drug coverage. Some provinces have increased coverage for citizens on low-income and/or high drug costs. To date however, there does not appear to be nationwide action to establish catastrophic drug coverage as promised by March 2006. Consequently many Canadian individuals and families have little or no protection against financial hardship due to the costs of necessary prescription medicines.

What progress are the provinces and territories making in implementing catastrophic drug coverage and how are the provinces and territories reporting on the use of federal funds that are being allocated

for catastrophic drug coverage? Are these reports available?

While the delivery of health care is a provincial responsibility under the British North America Act, the Canada Health Act (CHA) and long term federal funding provides the federal government with the legal mandate and the scope to ensure that the provinces and territories do not violate the CHA and that they meet the commitments they have agreed on with the federal government.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada welcomes cooperation between the federal and provincial and territorial governments that results in improving care for all people no matter where they live. The Presbyterian Church in Canada has affirmed on several occasions, its support for Medicare. Health care continues to change and needs to change, but it is our hope that these changes will benefit all people in Canada.

I look forward to hearing from you. Rest assured of our continuing prayers.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Self', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

The Reverend Harvey A. Self,
Moderator, The 135th General Assembly,
The Presbyterian Church in Canada