

Nova Scotia Citizens' Health Care Network



MEDICARE WORKS! KEEP IT PUBLIC. KEEP IT FAIR.

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URGENT – November 29, 2012

To Health Critics and Law Amendments Committee Members

We are writing today to urge you to bring forward an amendment to Bill 144 – The Insured Health Services Act. The final opportunities to do so will be in today's law amendments committee meeting and then in third reading of the bill, which has yet to be scheduled.

Very specifically, we are urging all of you to enshrine the five principles of the Canada Health Act – Universality, Public Administration, Comprehensiveness, Accessibility, and Portability – in the body of the legislation, not only in the preamble.

This has long been advocated by the Health Network and by other Medicare supporters across the country. It was even proposed by the Premier when he was NDP Health Critic in his Private Member's Bill (Bill 4) of March 23, 2001 called the "Medicare Protection Act".

We think that this change could be made quite simply by amending Section 2 of the Bill on page 2 to list the five basic principles of "public administration", "comprehensiveness", "universality", "portability" and "accessibility" after the clause "that satisfies the eligibility criteria for federal funding under the Canada Health Act". This is the purpose section and this would be an appropriate place to make this amendment.

These principles can be more effectively enforced if they are in the body of the Bill, and not just in its preamble. Courts have ruled that while the preamble provides for the government's intent, it is not legally enforceable.

Universal, single-tier public health care must be protected, strengthened and extended and we believe this change will further strengthen the proposed legislation.

Please review individual submissions made at Law Amendments yesterday for more

suggested amendments to the Bill. However we are all agreed in suggesting this enshrinement of the CHA principles into the body of Bill 144 as our number one priority suggestion for an amendment.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions. We would be happy to work with you to advance this amendment.

Regards,

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Chair