

## ISSUE

Canada's Federal Health Accord expired March 31, 2014 and universal health care is in jeopardy. Privatization of the health care system is increasing in some provinces and Canada continues to have a significant shortage of health care professionals.

## CONTEXT

Canada's Public Health Care System, established in 1966, is meant to provide universal access to medical care for all Canadians. In 1999, the Social Union Framework Agreement reaffirmed the federal/provincial commitment to a health care system based on the principles of "comprehensiveness, universality, portability, public administration and accessibility." Despite this, Canada's Federal Health Accord expired March 31, 2014. This federal/provincial/territorial Accord was designed to provide stable funding and national standards for wait times, home care, prescription drugs and team-based primary care. The federal government refuses to negotiate a new Health Accord and has announced \$36 billion in health care cuts over 10 years beginning in 2017. The lack of federal leadership in health care will lead to 14 different health care systems. Access to these systems will depend on your geography and ability to pay.

Changes and neglect have forced our health care system into a state of distress. More private care clinics and user-paid health care are emerging, which is in direct conflict with the Canada Health Act. User-paid health care is not accessible to all. Introducing more privatization into a public system could jeopardize an already critical situation where health facilities have difficulty finding and keeping health care professionals due to an uneven playing field. Some call for health care privatization because they are fed up with long wait times, due in part to the shortage of doctors. In 2013, 4.6 million or 15.5% of Canadians aged 12 and older did not have a regular family doctor. The growth in our aging population will only amplify the need for access to health care professionals.



The problems with the current public system can be resolved without turning to privatization. The federal government can choose to reinvest and reinvigorate our failing health care system. A vote is an opportunity for Canadians to weigh in on the state of our health care system. Canadians can choose a government that will create a long-term strategy, renegotiate the Health Accord, increase training spaces for doctors and nurses, and develop a system for recognizing foreign-trained health professionals' credentials. Individuals can choose a government that will provide stable, adequate funding and fight to protect and improve our universal public health system, respecting the rights of all Canadians to access the care and medication they need.

## QUESTIONS

- What will your party do to protect our public health care system?
- Does your party support a new Federal Health Accord to secure the health care needs of all citizens?
- Where does your party stand on private health care?

## RESOURCES

For more information and additional fact sheets in this series:  
<http://spno.ca/canada-votes-2015>