

TOP PRIORITY FASTER CARE

10 STEPS to ensure we get more and better care—faster

1. More health professionals.
2. A national home care program.
3. A national pharmacare plan.
4. Better nursing home care for the elderly.
5. More public investment in dental care and oral health promotion.
6. A national mental health strategy.
7. Accurate information and evidence to make better decisions.
8. Primary care reform and expansion.
9. Greater focus on prevention, promotion and public health initiatives.
10. Better chronic disease management.

Over the next several months we will be distributing leaflets setting out more details on each of these 10 crucial steps.



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*NATIONAL UNION OF PUBLIC
AND GENERAL EMPLOYEES*

- B. C. Government and Service Employees' Union
- Health Sciences Association of British Columbia
- Health Sciences Association of Alberta
- Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union
- Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union
- Ontario Public Service Employees Union
- Canadian Union of Brewery and General Workers
- New Brunswick Union of Public and Private Employees
- Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union
- PEI Union of Public Sector Employees
- Newfoundland & Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees

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The National Union of Public and General Employees is an affiliate of the Canadian Labour Congress and a member of the Public Services International.





The greatest
Canadian idea
ever

Our Medicare is the triumph of values and economics.

It provides all Canadians with equal access to care on the basis of need, not wealth or privilege or status.

Our Medicare has become a vital aspect of our shared citizenship - what every Canadian can rightfully expect wherever they live, whatever their income. It is the clearest reflection of who we are and what we value and it speaks volumes about the character of our nation.

But more than that, our Medicare is, quite simply, a good and sensible idea.

Health spending in Canada is on par with most countries in the Western world, it is substantially lower than in the United States, and Canada devotes a smaller portion of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to health care today than we did over a decade ago.

Our health outcomes, on almost every critical measure, are among the best in the world, and a strong majority of Canadians who use the system are highly satisfied with the quality and standard of care they receive.

Over the last 40 years our Medicare has served us very well, efficiently delivering high-quality services. We have good reason to be optimistic. Our Medicare is worth celebrating and defending.

But there is room for improvement. Our Medicare can be better and it can do better.

M E D I C A R E



TOP PRIORITY: Short wait times

Sick of waiting. Sick from waiting.

MEDICARE didn't always work this way. We didn't always have to wait way too long for care and worry way too much about not getting it. Now we do.

Now, too many of us have to wait months and months to see a specialist or to get a critical test. Too many of us worry and worry about the long, long waits for the replacement of a hip or the removal of cataracts. Medicare didn't always work this way.

Coming to grips with why it works that way now and how to fix it must be our top priority. We owe it to ourselves and to the great Canadian dream that became one of the best health care systems in the world.

But, the best medical care in the world isn't good enough if it isn't delivered soon enough. It's just plain old common sense:

when you treat people sooner, they get well sooner.

Shorter wait times will improve our health as individuals and will also improve the health of Medicare itself. A return to short wait times will restore confidence in the system overall and stimulate constructive reform and improvement of our Medicare. It will drive positive change and spur innovation within the system.

No quick fix

Over the last decade we've advocated for public reinvestment as the option of first resort. Most governments in Canada are now making significant public reinvestments in our Medicare. But we also know that significant injections of new public funding over the next several years will

not, in and of themselves, solve the problem of wait times.

Medicare was difficult to achieve — almost two decades from aspiration to realization. It was a hard slog. Today's challenge of reducing wait times also requires the same courageous leadership and a lot of hard work.

Public then, now, always

One thing about our search for a solution is plain: the reforms we want and need must, and can, be done within the system — within the public system.

We don't need a fresh round of ideological debate about for-profit health care. We made up our minds about that long ago and nothing has changed.

The consensus view of Canadians, confirmed over and over

in all the research studies, is that for-profit care will not deliver better, faster, cheaper or more health care services.

And, to make matters worse, we know for-profit care requires abandoning the values of caring for and about one another that led us to establish Medicare in the first place. On this issue Canadians have been very clear: Medicare is, and must remain, a moral enterprise. It must never become a mere business venture.

Modernize and expand

We believe that reducing wait times through reform within the public system requires action on two fronts. First, we must modernize how services are provided. Second, we must expand the services that are provided. We're proposing a 10-point plan for action on these two fronts. We believe these 10 steps will lead to shorter wait times and make our Medicare stronger, therefore ensuring more patients are treated sooner and more Canadians are healthier and live longer.

Our Medicare was a courageous initiative by visionary men and women. It was and is glowing proof that we are one of the world's most compassionate societies. It's time to build on this proud legacy. It's time to take the next big, bold steps that will transform our Medicare into a system that is even more responsive and comprehensive.

10 STEPS TO **FASTER CARE**

