



NEWS RELEASE - For immediate distribution

Health centres applaud provinces' commitment to innovation and collaboration

Toronto, January 18, 2012 - The association representing Community Health Centres (CHCs) across Canada today congratulated leaders of Canada's provinces and territories for emerging from their recent two-day meeting in Victoria, BC, with commitments to expanding health system collaboration and innovation across the country. Despite the visible absence at these meetings of Canada's federal government, which is refusing to collaborate with the provinces and territories on improving health system planning, the country's provincial and territorial leaders were able to identify key ways to move forward for the time being in the absence of federal leadership.

The Canadian Alliance of Community Health Centre Associations (CACHCA) is encouraged that provinces and territories are continuing to urge the federal government to fulfill its unique role as steward of Canada's overall health system and its responsibilities under the Canada Health Act. The association also described its strong hope that the Premiers' announcement of a new joint working group on innovation will finally lead to more Canadians being able to access innovations that are currently available to only some, depending on where one lives.

"Our association has for a long time advocated the need to identify and spread innovations within our publicly-funded health system to more Canadians, wherever they live. This is the very core of Tommy Douglas's original vision for Medicare and what he was referring to when he urged us to move toward the *Second Stage of Medicare*," noted CACHCA's Federal Coordinator, Scott Wolfe. "Amazing examples of Second Stage of Medicare innovations are already taking place at all levels of the health system, from community-oriented primary health care right

authority has committed to the Second Stage of Medicare and prioritized innovation."

Wolfe highlighted the area of primary health care as an example.

"Decades of Canadian reports have pointed to Community Health Centres as the way of the future in primary health care, and there have been some bold examples of local and provincial leadership in giving Canadians access to this model of local, team-based, person-centred care and support, most notably in the provinces of Québec and Ontario. However, the lack of coordination and planning across provinces has always been a major obstacle in bringing this health system solution to more Canadians. The new cross-Canada working group on innovation has the potential to change that."

With a timeframe of six months having been announced by the Premiers for the first stage of the working group's activities, CACHCA has committed to working with the provinces and territories to identify ways that various Second Stage of Medicare innovations, including Community Health Centres, can be expanded and scaled-up across the country.

"The solutions are there already, and now a promising cross-Canada process is also in place. We're excited about contributing to this process, working with our provincial, territorial and other health system partners across the country to finally give more Canadians the health and health care solutions they want and deserve."

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