



For immediate release

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healthcaretransformation.ca **Canadians to Get Their Say on Their Health Care System**

Ottawa, December 13, 2010 — The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) today launched a national dialogue on the future of the health care system with the unveiling of healthcaretransformation.ca, where Canadians can go online to share their views on health care. The initiative will also include a series of consultations across the country beginning in the new year and an expert committee to examine options for resourcing a transformed health care system.

“Health care consistently ranks among Canadians’ top public policy concerns,” said CMA President Dr. Jeff Turnbull. “Until now, governments have determined what kind of health care Canadians receive. This initiative is a unique opportunity for Canadians to let governments know what they expect from their health care system.”

The CMA believes it is imperative that Canadians engage in a full and open dialogue now, well before the current agreement on federal health transfers to the provinces and territories expires in 2014, with a view to guiding governments in their deliberations on health care.

“Canada’s physicians are pressing for nothing less than transformational change,” said Turnbull. “First and foremost, Canadians deserve a health care system that puts patients first and that will be sustainable over the long term. Their voices need to be heard.”

Representing 74,000 physicians in every province and territory, the CMA set the stage for the national dialogue last summer with the release of *Health Care Transformation: Change that Works. Care that Lasts*. It was based on broad consultation with other health care providers, as well as research on the principles of the *Canada Health Act* and whether the current health care system lives up to them.

“We are grateful for the input of stakeholders and other health care providers in developing this policy. We now look to them to fully participate in the national dialogue,” Turnbull said.

Another common starting point for the discussions is the *Charter for Patient-Centred Care*, a vision for a health care system that puts patients first and that was developed with the help of patient organizations from across the country.

“No one is more vital than the patient in the dialogue on health care transformation,” said Durhane Wong-Rieger, President and CEO, Institute for Optimizing Health Outcomes and a leading patient advocate. “We are encouraged by this CMA initiative. Having called for patients to be at the centre of the health care system, the CMA is creating opportunities for meaningful patient and public engagement in the consultation process. Driving change through patient-physician collaboration is an important step toward achieving

sustainable health services. We urge all patients to take part in these discussions.”

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The following are questions for Canadians to consider:

- 1. The law underpinning our system – the Canada Health Act – dates back to the 1980s. It covers only doctor and hospital care. Do you think it should be broadened to include things like pharmacare and long-term care?**
- 2. It is important for citizens to feel they are receiving good value for their health care. What would you consider good value?**
- 3. Patients and their families play an important part in their health care. What do you think Canadians’ responsibilities are, now and in the future, in regards to their health?**

The answers to these questions, coupled with those gathered during the public consultations, will provide critical direction for building a sustainable health care system that puts patients first.

Broadcast materials:

Broadcast quality video and audio of the website’s statements can be downloaded from this site:
http://www.skyflyproductions.com/CMA_AMC/

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