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Constituent Societies
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December 9th, 2002

**The Honourable Anne McLelland
Minister of Health - Health Canada**

Dear Minister McLelland:

The Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) through individual membership and its Constituent Societies represents over 3000 people working in public and community health across Ontario. OPHA is pleased with the recommendations of the Romanow Commission outlined in its report, *Building on Values: The Future of Health Care in Canada*. They are based in the values articulated overwhelmingly by Canadians while at the same time are aimed at transforming the Canadian Health System to more appropriately meet the demands of the 21st century.

OPHA strongly endorses the proposed Primary Health Care Transfer of \$1 Billion to fast track its implementation. OPHA applauds the clear recognition of prevention and promotion initiatives as central focus of primary health care. These fundamental public health activities have been for too long been under-funded and under-appreciated. Immunization, injury and disease prevention and health promotion have given Canadians 20 years of life for less than five cents of the health dollar. Public Health has always been a 24/7 system, ensuring safe water and food, safe places to live and work and providing information on diseases and how to prevent them.

OPHA also applauds the new \$1 Billion Home Care Transfer fund to establish a national platform for home care services. The expansion of the Canada Health Act means that all Canadians will have access to essential mental health, post-acute and palliative care regardless of where they live. This fund will ensure that the necessary community based services are integrated within the health system. This expansion will mean that at the provincial level the important preventive, health promotion and maintenance functions of home care will continue to be part of the continuing care envisioned by Commission.

OPHA now calls upon politicians at both the Federal and Provincial level to act in implementing these necessary

changes to ensure a viable, equitable and appropriate health system for the 21st century.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jack Lee
Executive Director,
Ontario Public Health Association