



Ontario Public Health Association  
l'Association pour la santé publique de l'Ontario  
Established/Établi 1949

The mission of OPHA is to provide leadership on issues affecting the public's health and to strengthen the impact of people who are active in public and community health throughout Ontario.

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Charitable Registration  
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May 8, 2002

**To: Ms. Lillian Bayne  
Commission on the Future of Canada's Public Health Care  
System**

Dear Ms. Bayne:

**Re: The submission of the Registered Nurses Association  
of Ontario (RNAO)**

The Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) forwarded its submission to the commission on November 9, 2001. While OPHA was not among those who were invited to present verbally to the commission during its hearings in Toronto, we have been following the procedures carefully.

OPHA strongly believes that public health is a fundamental component of a sustainable health system. OPHA also believes that a truly sustainable system is a balanced system, which invests in a full range of services from public health and community care through hospitals and long-term care.

This position is consistent with the public health legacy of concern for social and physical contexts of health, a legacy for which much credit is due for the improvements in health and reduction in mortality we have witnessed over the past 100 years.

The public health legacy is one of reform. OPHA recognizes that the system can be improved. The development of more community base alternatives to institutionalized care, the recognition that services should reflect the community in which they are delivered and support the activities of public health within that context are examples of how to improve the system without destroying or damaging its core strengths.

It is because of this that OPHA read with particular interest the submission of the RNAO entitled **More of a Good Thing: The Facts & Foundation for Expanding Medicare**. We are particularly supportive of **Recommendation 3: RNAO urges the federal government to extend CHA principles to community services: public health; primary health care;**

**home care; rehabilitation; palliative care; eldercare and pharmacare. We recommend this be accomplished by introducing a Community Care Act, companion legislation to the CHA. We oppose opening the CHA given the powerful lobby to dismantle Medicare.**

In its interim report: **Shape the Future of Health Care**, the commission lists several observations based upon its preliminary work. These include: "we need to strike a better balance between treating people when they are sick and injured and focusing on broader health determinants that address underlying causes of poor health and have the best potential for improving the overall health of Canadians." As well, the report states: " more needs to be done to invest in promotion and prevention activities."

OPHA firmly believes that both of these points: a better balance between treatment and the broad determinants of health and more investments in health promotion and disease prevention activities, would be achieved by the introduction of a Community Care Act as outlined in the RNAO submission. For this reason, OPHA is writing to express its strong support for a Community Care Act, companion to the Canada Health Act.

Sincerely,

Connie Uetrecht  
President, OPHA Board of Directors