

MEDICAL REFORM GROUP

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CMA PRESIDENT ADVOCATES AGAINST PUBLIC INTEREST: DOCTORS' GROUP

A Canadian physicians' group condemned Robert Ouellet, the new President of the Canadian Medical Association for trying to push privately funded for-profit health care on the Canadian public.

"It's unfortunate that, following Brian Day, the CMA has another president who is ready to lead Canada down a road where what you can pay, rather than what you need, determines the health care you receive," said Medical Reform Group spokesperson Gordon Guyatt.

A recent study conducted by the Ontario Health Coalition documented the proliferation of investor-owned clinics across Canada.

"These clinics represent a fundamental threat to universal access on the basis of need, not ability to pay," said another MRG spokesperson, Dr. Ahmed Bayoumi. "Direct charges to patients for insured services are a clear violation of the Canada Health Act. They represent a move toward U.S.-style two-tiered medicine."

Dr. Ouellet advocates expansion of such clinics. "Expanding investor-owned clinics sucks scarce resources, including doctors and nurses, from publicly funded hospitals and out-patient facilities," Dr. Bayoumi explained. "The evidence regarding care delivered by for-profit providers is clear: higher death rates, greater costs to third party payers."

Dr. Guyatt commented on Dr. Ouellet's plans to travel to Europe to look for solutions to Canadian health care problems. "I'm afraid what Dr. Ouellet will see will be determined more by his politics than by the European reality. Europe has more publicly funded care, including drugs and dental care, than Canada. Europe's health system also benefits from social and public housing programs are effective in combating poverty, the number one preventable cause of ill health."

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