

**MEDICAL REFORM GROUP:
CMA USING AN AXE INSTEAD OF A SCALPEL**

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The MRG of Ontario commends Brian Day and the Canadian Medical Association for raising the issues of wait times and doctor shortages but chides the doctors' organization for not aggressively advocating the public sector solutions that will keep Medicare on course.

"Brian Day is an excellent surgeon," said MRG spokesperson Ahmed Bayoumi, "but when it comes to health policy he wants to operate with an axe rather than a scalpel."

In a document released yesterday, the CMA pointed out the looming increase in the shortage of doctors, and called for a massive increase in training.

"Yes, we need to train more doctors," said another MRG spokesperson, Dr. Shelley Sender. "But we also need to get serious about transforming primary health care toward a multidisciplinary model of care. Increased reliance on nurse practitioners, for instance, should be part of the solution."

In a second document, the CMA pointed to the economic cost of patients waiting for elective procedures.

"Of course, waiting lists are a problem. But the report repeatedly mentions the Chaoulli decision. Is this more of Brian Day pushing for-profit delivery as a solution when public sector remedies are what are really needed?" Dr. Bayoumi questioned.

"What would be really welcome is for the CMA to push hard for more of the innovations that would effectively address wait lists while maintaining equitable health care for all Canadians" Dr. Bayoumi concluded. "That would include targeted funding for developing a national information technology system, not-for-profit dedicated outpatient surgical facilities, and national Pharmacare and national home care programs."

- 30 -

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