

Rock Insists That New Brunswick Pay for Clinic Abortions

Late Enforcement of Canada Health Act Better Than None at All

The Medical Reform Group today praised Federal Health Minister Alan Rock for his decision to enforce the Canada Health Act. New Brunswick has failed to pay for abortion surgery conducted in private clinics. Rock intends to insist that the provincial government pay for services at these clinics, as well as abortions conducted in hospitals, or face federal withdrawal of funds.

"The New Brunswick policy is a clear violation of the Canada Health Act," said MRG spokesperson Dr. Gordon Guyatt. "Internal documents show that the federal government came to that conclusion in 1999. They should have acted then. Nevertheless, we congratulate them on finally mustering up the political courage to take appropriate measures."

"The basis of the supreme court decision on abortion was one of fairness," said another MRG spokesperson, Dr. Rosana Pellizzari. "The supreme court decided that it was unfair for some women to have access to abortion services, and to have those services denied to other women. Fairness is also the justification for the Canada Health Act. Rock is on very strong grounds in his action."

The federal government has been stalling in enforcing numerous violations of the Canada Health Act.

"Alberta and Quebec are openly allowing user charges for MRI scanning," Dr. Guyatt said. "Its a national scandal. We trust that Mr. Rock will soon be announcing his intent to enforce the Canada Health Act in that arena as well."