

## **Romanow Gets an A**

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The Medical Reform Group is giving Roy Romanow near-top grades for the central recommendations in his landmark report.

"On the key issues of who funds health care, and who delivers it, Romanow has got it right," said MRG spokesperson Dr. Ahmed Bayoumi. "Romanow not only endorses continued public funding of physician and hospital services, but the expansion of Medicare coverage to home care and pharmacare. On the delivery side, he correctly concludes that not-for-profit delivery gives the best assurance of high quality health care."

Romanow's report points out that public funding meets two key policy goals. First, it ensures equitable access to high quality care. Second, because a single payer system results in far lower administrative costs than private funding, public funding has proven more efficient.

"If Canadians understand Romanow's central points, they will quickly buy in to his funding argument," said another MRG spokesperson, Dr. Gordon Guyatt. "While publicly funded pharmacare and home care may result in higher taxes, lower insurance costs and decreased out-of-pocket expenses will more than make up. In the end, publicly funded health care will result in greater disposable income for Canadians."

On the delivery side, Romanow's recommendations are completely consistent with the evidence. The Commissioner challenged advocates of investor-owned, for-profit provision to provide data to support their claims. They were unable to meet the challenge.

"In contrast," said Guyatt, "systematic summaries of studies comparing private for-profit versus private not-for-profit care have shown increased death rates in both for-profit hospitals and for-profit dialysis units. For-profit care is a deadly prescription for Canadians. Romanow has heard the message loud and clear, and has acted accordingly."

"The reason that Romanow missed an A+ grade is that he has backed away from new tax revenue to fund health care," Dr. Bayoumi concluded. "High quality health care is too important to trust to hit-or-miss budget surpluses."