

Tories Toss Away Health System Efficiencies

Released – May 1, 2001

The provincial governments plan to send health bills to patients is seriously misguided, the Medical Reform Group said today.

"One of the benefits of universal, single-payer health care is its administrative efficiency," commented MRG spokesperson Dr. Gordon Guyatt. "For instance, Canadians pay less than half the administrative costs of Americans."

"That means that resources can go in to delivering front line care," continued Guyatt. "The governments plan to send patients health bills creates wasteful bureaucratic inefficiency. The money should be spent on implementing primary care reform, shortening waiting lists for surgery, and improving nurses working conditions."

There are other problems with the plan, suggested another MRG spokesperson, Dr. Rosana Pellizzari. "There is a big issue of patient confidentiality," Pellizzari noted. "It is certain that many of the letters to patients will go astray. Patients are entitled to have their medical visits kept private."

"The biggest disaster about the program is that its a complete waste," Pellizzari continued. "There is no evidence that OHIP fraud will be significantly reduced, or that patient awareness of their bills will change any ones behaviour."

"Its a stupid gimmick," Guyatt concluded. "It gives the illusion that the government is doing something useful with health care. Its a real shame that when there are urgent problems to deal with, and potential solutions, that the government is ready to waste money, and place another needless burden on physicians."