

January 26, 2007 - Media Release

## **GOVERNMENTS MUST STOP OPEN TWO TIER CARE IN QUEBEC, SAYS MEDICAL REFORM GROUP**

“The latest developments in Quebec represent open two tier health care,” Medical Reform group spokesperson Gordon Guyatt said today. “A new clinic in Quebec conducting arthroscopies, hernia repairs and other day surgeries will be charging patients \$1,300 to jump the queue. If Stephen Harper is true to his word about enforcing the Canada Health Act and protecting Medicare, he must act now.”

Both federal Liberal and Conservative governments have tolerated violations of the Canada Health Act, largely in British Columbia and Quebec. Violations have been in areas of sophisticated diagnostic tests such as MRI, and day surgical procedures.

Recently, Gordon Campbell’s British Columbia government drew the line at charging patients for emergency room care, and prevented a for-profit clinic from making such charges.

“Two things make the latest violation important,” Guyatt continued. “First, it is being done openly and publicly, rather than quietly and covertly. Second, the Quebec government may interpret the clinic’s charges as consistent with their recent legislation.”

The Quebec government has claimed that their legislation would prevent doctors from working both within the publicly funded system and privately funded for-profit clinics at the same time.

“At this new clinic, public dollars are supporting patients who queue-jump and doctors who are setting up a two-tier system,” said Dr. Guyatt. “This is a clear violation of all the principles of public health care.”

“Now is the chance for Stephen Harper to show that he really has changed his stripes and believes in Medicare,” Guyatt concluded. “If he fails to act, the public will see that his declarations of support for universal, equitable care are nothing more than political show.”

- 30 -

For more information:  
Janet Maher (416) 787-5246/(416) 782-0698