

My Better Medicare

BETTER MEDICARE FOR ALL CANADIANS



Background

Since its inception, Canadian Doctors for Medicare has advocated for equitable access to high quality, medically necessary physician and hospital services. Given Canada's health care challenges, simply defending the status quo is not an option. We need to address our health human resource shortages, demographic shifts, and the need for efficient allocation of public funds. **Advocating for Medicare means not only defending the *Canada Health Act* but also advocating for continuous improvement in the health care system.** The principles enshrined in the *Canada Health Act*—accessibility, universality, portability, comprehensiveness and public administration should be viewed as a foundation upon which a high-quality health care system must be built and continually improved. Although these principles represent the minimum necessary conditions that the system must satisfy, they are not sufficient to ensure the health of Canadians or the sustainability of our system.

Principles

The My Better Medicare Campaign is about moving forward with positive change in health care *within* the publicly-funded system rather than outside it. The campaign will identify and disseminate existing and potential innovations to local or provincial health systems that enhance patient care or the effectiveness of service and sustain the principles of the *Canada Health Act*. These practical, tested solutions that are adapted to the Canadian context offer opportunities to improve our system rather than dismantling it. Initiatives will be highlighted for their contribution to:

- Increasing equity, not only in access but also in outcomes
- Improving the overall quality of care
- Increasing the provision of effective, clinically indicated services
- Decreasing the provision of ineffective services that are not clinically indicated
- Efficiently using financial and human resources
- Engaging the public in health system resource allocation, design and delivery issues

Goals

The overarching goals of the My Better Medicare Campaign are to:

- 1) Illustrate to doctors, ordinary Canadians and policymakers how our health care system is currently being improved, and can continue to be improved, by innovating within Medicare
- 2) Share innovative and valuable best practices and ideas among health care professionals and policy makers, with the ultimate goal of improving the health care system for all Canadians

Action

The My Better Medicare Campaign will pursue its goals through three areas of activity.

1. Website: www.mybettermedicare.ca

The My Better Medicare site will be a clearinghouse for innovation and ideas supporting better health care in an equitable public system. Each week, guest bloggers will post news from across Canada showing how our health care system is growing and changing to meet its challenges. The site will share innovations. For example, more effective knee and hip replacement approaches at the Alberta Bone and Joint Health Institute have decreased wait times. Also, the rural health teams on Long and Brier Island have increased health outcomes and decreased resource demands. These stories will make research and best practices broadly available. They will also invite discussion and debate among physicians and the public about the results via comment pages attached to each posted innovation.

Guest bloggers will be health care leaders from across the country including:

- Jeanne Bessner, RN
- Dr. Sandy Buchman, MD
- Dr. Dale Dewar, MD
- Dr. Gordon Guyatt, MD
- Dr. Carol Herbert, MD
- Dr. Alan Katz, MD
- Dr. Jock Murray, MD
- Dr. Randall White, MD
- Dr. Robert Woollard, MD

The My Better Medicare website will also be a place where the successes of our health care system are celebrated. Patients wishing to share experiences and make suggestions about how to improve the system within an equity framework can add to the wealth of existing ideas posted on the site.

2. Awards

Canadian Doctors for Medicare, in partnership with two peer-reviewed journals, *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, and *Canadian Family Physician*, invites medical students and residents across Canada to submit a 1500 word article on their vision for a Better Medicare. Successful submissions will be published by one of the journals and one author chosen by Canadian Doctors for Medicare will receive an all-expense paid trip to the Canadian Doctors for Medicare and Canadian Medical Association annual meetings.

The competition is an opportunity for emerging leaders in health care to put forward their ideas, and meet leaders in the field at their annual meetings.

In future years, My Better Medicare will present awards to exceptional practical innovations in health care that improve patient care while supporting the principles of equity and quality.

3. Communications

My Better Medicare is designed to engage Canadians in the discussion about the future of the health care system this country pioneered. Reaching out to medical professionals, researchers, policy makers and ordinary Canadians is part of that effort.

CDM and its partners will use the website and the Future Practitioner Awards to circulate information and engage the general public, health care professionals, medical students and interns in the national conversation on public health care. Email networks, advertisements, earned media and newsletter articles will bring information about the campaign and the innovations it highlights to an ever-widening circle of participants discussing a Made in Canada solution to the challenges facing Medicare.

My Better Medicare will work to enhance the dialogue in Canada to bring forward the ideas and innovations that can continue to build evidence-based solutions that reflect Canadian values to tackle the challenges facing our public health care system.



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