



News Release

Nunavut Health Minister says national report reinforces argument for increased federal spending in health care

IQALUIT, Nunavut (June 9, 2000) – Health and Social Services Minister Ed Picco said a national report identifying current and projected health care costs strengthens the argument that territories and provinces can no longer support the growing cost of health care without the infusion of federal spending.

The preliminary report, *Understanding Canada's Healthcare Costs*, was developed by the provinces and territories and was shared today with the Prime Minister as a contribution to the national discussions underway on the sustainability of Canada's health care system. In part, it examines current funding levels and identifies a number of anticipated future costs.

“This report reinforces what health ministers across the country have been telling the federal government – that the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) must be immediately and fully restored and that there must be an appropriate escalator to ensure that funding keeps pace with need,” Minister Picco said.

The report illustrates the growing gap between the territorial/provincial funding commitments in the health system and the relative decline of the federal share of funding. It also outlines how territories and provinces are addressing the health care reform.

“If we're talking about reform and innovation within the health care system, that's something we've already been doing in Nunavut,” Minister Picco said. “Because of our logistics, we've had to explore creative ways of providing health care. Our system is already as bare bones as it can be without jeopardizing people's health, but it's just not enough.”

Minister Picco added his department has been working on initiatives such as telehealth and increasing community-based nursing capacity, but costs continue to rise at an amazing rate.

“The figures in the report show that our requests are modest, reasonable and essential to the sustainability of Canada's publicly-funded health care system,” Minister Picco added.

The final report is expected to be completed by August, in time for the Annual Premiers' Conference in Winnipeg.

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