

July 14, 2011

The Honourable Greg Selinger  
Chair, The Council of the Federation  
Premier of Manitoba  
204 Legislative Building  
450 Broadway  
Winnipeg MB, R3C 0V8

The Honourable Christy Clark  
Vice-Chair, The Council of the Federation  
Premier of British Columbia  
PO Box 9041  
Station Provincial Government  
Victoria BC, V8W 9E1

**Subject: The place of public health in a future FPT health agreement  
2011 Summer Meeting of the Council of the Federation**

Dear Premier Selinger and Premier Clark:

The Canadian Coalition for Public Health in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (CCPH21) extends its best wishes to the Council of the Federation for a successful deliberation during the 2011 Summer Meeting in Vancouver. We are writing to you, Premier Selinger, as the Chair of the Council, and to Premier Clark as the Council's Vice-Chair and the host of this important event, and to the First Ministers who comprise the Council of the Federation (to whom this letter is copied), to request that the Council take into consideration an issue that CCPH21 believes warrants attention. This is the place of "public health" in a future federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) health agreement.

The CCPH21 is a network of 33 national non-profit organizations, professional associations, health charities and academic researchers who share the common goal to improve and sustain the health of Canadians. The CCPH21 was created in 2004, following the SARS outbreak, to give a broad-based non-governmental voice to the urgent need at that time for a substantive investment in the country's public health system. We called for the creation of the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), the establishment of the office of Chief Public Health Officer of Canada (CPHO), and investment in pandemic preparedness and response. Over the intervening years, the CCPH21 has consistently called upon the federal government to increase its investment in support of a pan-Canadian public health infrastructure, to expand the country's public health human resources and to provide leadership on public health issues that affect the health and well-being of all Canadians.

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The 2003 Health Accord contained a section on “disease prevention, health promotion and public health”. The First Ministers restated their commitment in 2004 to support a strong “public health system” and cited the establishment of PHAC and the position of CPHO, although not elements of the Health Accord, as examples of moving forward on this agenda. The FPT Ministers specified in the 2004 Health Reform Plan that efforts would be made to also put into place the following “public health” initiatives:

- FPT collaboration and cooperation in developing coordinated responses to infectious disease outbreaks and other public health emergencies through the new Public Health Network;
- The federal government would continue its ongoing investments for needed vaccines through the National Immunization Strategy;
- FPT commitment to accelerate work on a pan-Canadian Public Health Strategy, which would include setting goals and targets for improving the health status of Canadians. The Strategy would include efforts to address common risk factors and integrated disease strategies; and,
- First Ministers commit to working across sectors to support and promote healthy settings.

As we approach the end-date of the current FPT agreement on health care and anticipate the beginning of negotiations around a new Canada Health Transfer, the Coalition is using its voice to draw attention to the place of public health in a future fiscal arrangement. The CCPH21 would like to see an enhanced public health component within a future agreement between the federal, provincial and territorial governments.

We welcome the recent Declaration on Prevention and Promotion by the FPT Ministers of Health, which can be viewed as another step in developing a Pan-Canadian Public Health Strategy along with the creation of the Public Health Network. This declaration and others published recently by the federal, provincial and territorial governments are important instruments to garner political, public and multi-sector support for action on priority public health issues facing our citizens.

While we agree with a guaranteed 6% annual escalator of federal transfers to the provinces and territories in support of a range of health care services, the CCPH21 calls for a more robust comprehensive population health-based public health component within a future “Health Accord”. If not, then we are concerned that the investments made by FPT governments will continue to focus on medically insurable services and not address the “upstream” factors that impact the health of Canadians and can result in decreased utilization of health care services and hospitalization rates, as well as improved health outcomes.

The CCPH21 respectfully urges the First Ministers to include in their deliberations a discussion around investing in public health (disease and injury prevention, health promotion, health protection, population health assessment, health surveillance and monitoring, and pandemic preparedness and response), in addition to discussions about investments in the continuum of care and treatment for illness and disease. We would recommend that the First Ministers:

1. Review their joint public health commitments within the 2003 Health Accord and take the steps necessary to implement them fully in a new Health Accord, and,
2. Consider the recommendations of the report tabled in June 2009 by the Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. *A Healthy Productive Canada:*

*A Determinant of Health Approach* highlighted the impact of the broader social and economic determinants of health on the health of Canadians and especially on health disparities across population groups and communities in Canada.

3. Put in place concerted, coordinated and integrated federal and provincial/territorial policy and programmatic commitments, and effective and sustained investment in support of essential public health functions and support to the community-level actions and innovation.

In closing, we thank you for taking the time to consider our unsolicited submission. The CCPH21 remains at your disposal should you or your fellow First Ministers wish to discuss our perspective further. We wish you a successful summer meeting, and look forward to hearing about its outcomes as they pertain to discussions related to health and health care.

Sincerely,



Pamela C. Fralick  
Co-Chair, Canadian Coalition for  
Public Health in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century



Debra Lynkowski  
Co-Chair, Canadian Coalition for  
Public Health in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

c.c: The Honourable Eva Aariak, Premier of Nunavut  
The Honourable David Alward, Premier of New Brunswick  
The Honourable Jean Charest, Premier of Québec  
The Honourable Darrell Dexter, Premier of Nova Scotia  
The Honourable Kathy Dunderdale, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador  
The Honourable Robert Ghiz, Premier of Prince Edward Island  
The Honourable Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario  
The Honourable Darrell Pasloski, Premier of Yukon  
The Honourable Floyd K. Roland, Premier of the Northwest Territories  
The Honourable Ed Stelmach, Premier of Alberta  
The Honourable Brad Wall, Premier of Saskatchewan  
The Secretariat of the Council of the Federation

Ministers of Health

The Honourable Carolyn Bertram, Minister of Health and Wellness, Prince Edward Island  
The Honourable Yves Bolduc, Minister of Health and Social Services, Québec  
The Honourable Tagak Curley, Minister of Health and Social Services, Nunavut  
The Honourable Madeleine Dubé, Minister of Health, New Brunswick  
The Honourable Glenn Hart, Minister of Health and Social Services, Yukon  
The Honourable Michael de Jong, Minister of Health, British Columbia  
The Honourable Jerome P. Kennedy, Minister of Health and Community Services, NFLD and Labrador  
The Honourable Sandy Lee, Minister of Health and Social Services, Northwest Territories  
The Honourable Maureen MacDonald, Minister of Health and Wellness, Nova Scotia  
The Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care for Ontario  
The Honourable Don McMorris, Minister of Health, Saskatchewan  
The Honourable Theresa Oswald, Minister of Health, Manitoba  
The Honourable Gene Zwozdesky, Minister of Health and Wellness, Alberta