

4 April 2001

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Health Minister Allan Rock today announced the launch of the Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada to be headed by Mr. Roy Romanow. The Commission will inquire into and undertake dialogue with Canadians on the future of Canada's public health care system.

"Our government's decision to create the Commission is another important step in fulfilling our pledge to ensure Canadians that our public, universal health care system works better and smarter to meet their needs," said the Prime Minister. "I am delighted that it will be chaired by Roy Romanow. I know him to be a steadfast defender of the five principles of the Canada Health Act and a creative advocate for federal, provincial and territorial cooperation to achieve public health care modernization and renewal."

"The First Ministers agreement on funding and a Health Action Plan serve as a blueprint to meet the short and medium term challenges facing our health care system," said Minister Rock. "This Commission will allow us to better understand and plan for the long-term challenges, such as changing demographics and rising costs of technologies and treatments, so that Canadians can continue to benefit from quality services in our universally accessible system."

Appointed under Part 1 of the Inquiries Act, Mr. Romanow will report to the Prime Minister. The Commission will recommend policies and measures over the long term to ensure the sustainability of a universally accessible publicly-funded health system which offers quality services to Canadians and which strikes an appropriate balance among investments in prevention and health maintenance, and those directed to care and treatment.

Roy Romanow, former Premier of Saskatchewan, will lead the Commission as it consults with Canadians, with provincial and territorial governments and with health professionals and stakeholders.

The work of the Commission will build on the foundation already established by First Ministers in their September 2000 Agreement on health system renewal wherein all First Ministers affirmed their support for a common vision for health, a publicly-financed health system and the five principles of universality, accessibility, comprehensiveness, portability and public administration.

Mr. Romanow will be the sole Commissioner appointed by the federal government under the Inquiries Act. A secretariat will be established to support the Commissioner and reports and documents will be publicly available throughout the work of the Commission.

It is expected the Commission will commence its work on May 1, 2001 and report to the Prime Minister by November 2002.

— Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada, Media Releases:
<www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/care/romanow/hcc0151.html>

"The principles of the Canada Health Act began as simple conditions attached to federal funding for Medicare. Over time, they became much more than that. Today, they represent both the values underlying the health care system and the conditions that governments attach to funding a national system of public health care. The principles have stood the test of time and continue to reflect the values of Canadians."

~ Final Report of the Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada, Roy J. Romanow, Q.C. November 28, 2002

What is the Canada Health Act?

The Canada Health Act is Canada's federal health insurance legislation.

The Act sets out the primary objective of Canadian health care policy:

"...to protect, promote and restore the physical and mental well-being of residents of Canada and to facilitate reasonable access to health services without financial or other barriers."

