

Appendix 1

ACER-CART Policy on HEALTH-CARE IN CANADA (adopted 2002 AGM)

1. The five historic principles of the Canada Health Act (1984) (universality, access, comprehensiveness, portability and public administration) shall define any vision, current or renewed, for publicly funded health care in Canada. These principles shall inform all ACER-CART interventions on health care in Canada.
2. The Federal Government is an essential partner with the provinces in the provision of health care. Among other things, it has the responsibility to define national standards for health care and to provide funding, supplementary to provincial funding, adequate to ensure the implementation of such national standards. ACER-CART shall, insofar as it is able, support efforts of the Federal Government to renew existing national standards and in monitoring their implementation.
3. Timely access to health care and required services, provided by qualified medical personnel, in the official language of the patient's choice (2005), shall be the right of all Canadians, irrespective of their place of residence, financial circumstances, or state of health. (para. 3, amended June, 2005)
4. Health care shall be deemed to include education, prevention, diagnosis and counselling, and shall be the element upon which all health care pivots in a Canadian comprehensive health care system.
5. Seniors constitute an increasing proportion of Canadian society. Seniors have special needs and ACER-CART, on their behalf, urges health care policy- makers to take an integrated approach to health care, one that will ensure seniors a measure of independence commensurate with their history; will ensure a quality of life and death with dignity through care at home, in long-term care facilities, and in hospital settings.
6. Many Canadians rely on medications for their very lives. Given the proportion of seniors making up the Canadian population and their special needs, a review of costs in providing necessary drugs is mandatory. This review shall include, inter alia: the way pharmaceuticals are prescribed to an ageing population and the benefits to be derived from more holistic approaches to medical treatment. ACER-CART believes that adequate provision of medication ought to form an essential component in the national health care program.
7. All citizens of Canada have a right to health care. System efficiencies, streamlining operations, and restructuring health care facilities shall not be accepted as sufficient reason to deny citizens this right, regardless of location or wealth. It is conceded, however, that such services need to be provided as efficiently as possible.
8. Health care shall be provided out of revenues gleaned by governments from public taxation.
9. Possible expansion of publicly funded health services shall not compromise the availability and quality of those medical services currently insured, except for those services no longer deemed basic or required.
10. Organizations of retired teachers will continue to be involved with the development of health care strategies intended to benefit Canadians of all generations, in a meaningful and continuing way.
11. ACER-CART urges all levels of government to determine, in concert, their share of the costs of health care and make a commitment to paying such shares each year for several years and that information concerning such agreements is made public.
12. ACER-CART believes that home care should constitute an essential element of the national health care system.