

HEALTH CORE VALUES STATEMENT

I. INTRODUCTION *to Health Core Values*

(APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ONTARIO)

Canadian Pensioners Concerned (CPC), founded in 1969, is a membership-based, non-partisan advocacy organization of mature Canadians committed to preserving and enhancing a human-centred vision of life for all its citizens of all ages.

CPC has particular concern for the quality of life for people in our society who by virtue of age, illness, physical or psychological disabilities or impairments, and/or economic need are especially vulnerable in a society driven by market place, economically determined values, often to the exclusion of other societal values that sustain and enhance a fair, just and inclusive social order.

CPC is concerned about the nature and substance of changes that deeply affect the quality of life of people of all ages and circumstances including seniors. CPC asks legislators and decision makers -- Do proposed or enacted legislative and policy changes by governments, other public, community and private organizations pass the crucial litmus test of serving well the general public good? CPC supports those which do, and advocates alternate approaches when, in their view, legislation or policies fail to meet that test. CPC has fundamental concerns about both the rationality and fairness that lie behind many of the radical changes being pursued at all levels of government at the present time and the speed or pace of such change, often without full and open public disclosure, debate and dialogue with all citizens including those individuals and groups who are directly and indirectly affected by such changes.

Such far-reaching decisions require the assembly and assessment of the relevant facts, the human experience, the potential impact, and the long-term consequences of changes which vitally affect the lives and well-being of people.

CPC believes major changes must be intelligently and sensitively managed in a realistic and timely fashion. not simply manipulated to accomplish predetermined ends. Open disclosure, public involvement and honest debate are essential to achieve lasting and publicly-supported outcomes in a democratic society. Furthermore, we firmly believe that the wisdom and experience of seniors has a crucial role to play in such debates.

II HEALTH CORE VALUES

Concern for the health of a nation's people is central to civilized societies throughout the world. Countries and peoples are judged in significant measure by the adequacy of the provisions that are made to protect, enhance and promote the health and well-being of their citizens.

-- CPC supports strongly the principles contained in the Canada Health Act. This Act was the culmination of many earlier and difficult incremental steps to address the need for a publicly administered and funded, comprehensive, universal, accessible, affordable, portable and fully publicly accountable health services system. CPC considers the Canada Health Act an irrevocable contract between the government of Canada and the Canadian people. CPC regards the Act's provisions as a central and positive defining characteristic of Canadian society.

Threats to the preservation, continuity and elaboration of the principles and implementation of the Act's provisions cause deep and widespread anxiety when comparisons are made with other countries whose health care systems are fragmented, costly and discriminatory, and which place quality health care beyond the reach of large portions of those countries' populations.

-- CPC specifically supports the public funding of medically necessary services under Medicare and the single payer model.

-- CPC values and embraces a broad vision of health encompassing physical, emotional, social, economic, environmental and intellectual well-being for citizens of all ages and life circumstances, since most of these aspects are critical determinants of an individual's health status.

-- CPC places a high value on the incremental development of a fully integrated and coordinated system of health care services ranging from community based initial primary care, prevention and support services through to acute and specialized hospital, clinic and long term care facilities and services that are responsive to the individual's need and choice at various points in the life continuum.

-- CPC believes the individual citizen and his/her family has the right to participate in planning his or her own care to the fullest extent possible.

-- CPC places a high value on the continuing -- and not diminishing -- leadership and presence of the Federal government in funding, administration, standard setting, research and dissemination of health information to the provinces and the general public.

-- CPC supports the introduction of a national, publicly funded universal Drug Plan.

-- CPC supports the expansion of a more comprehensive and adequate publicly funded home care program as a frontline alternative to, and defense against, costly, premature and unnecessary institutionalization of ill or disabled individuals.

-- CPC believes that the utilization of non-profit organizations in the provision of Health Services should be promoted and supported and that the trend to private, for profit organizations should be resisted.

In summary, CPC endorses the vision and core values articulated in the 1989 Ontario Premier's Council on Health Strategy which stated:

"We see an Ontario in which people live longer in good health, and disease and disability are progressively reduced. We see people empowered to realize their full health potential through a safe, non-violent environment, adequate income, housing, food and education, and a valued role to play in family, work and the community. We see people having equitable access to affordable and appropriate health care regardless of geography, income, gender or cultural background. Finally, we see everyone working together to achieve better health for all."