

JOINT HEALTH PROFESSIONS COMMITTEE (JHP) PRESENTATION TO

LIBERAL CAUCUS

June 10, 1997 - Victoria, BC

THE GOAL

The joint Health Professions Committee is a group of health care professions dedicated to working with the Ministry of Health and the provincial government to provide *comprehensive health care for British Columbians*. The Committee's goal is the development of a mutually beneficial proposal that outlines the delivery of services for each profession without compromising access or funding for those services. The proposal presents a funding model through which government can protect British Columbia's health care.

THE PROPOSAL

The Joint Health Professions Committee proposes that monthly MSP premiums be increased by \$1.50 - \$2.00 per person *to adequately fund medicare* and eliminate the \$10.00 Patient Visit Charge (PVC).

An independent survey in April 1997 by Marktrend Research reported that *89% of British Columbians wanted supplementary health services to be included under MSP*. Seventy percent thought *\$1.50 - \$2.00 to be an acceptable premium increase per person* to appropriately fund the health professions.

Implementation of the proposal will protect existing and future monies for the BCMA. A distinct fund can be established within medicare through the Medical and Health Care Services Special Account Act. Monies would come from the existing budgets, and future premiums. As a result each profession would be appropriately funded in the future.

Government and the public gains from the clear establishment of Medicare funding in the most affordable manner and protects the rights of British Columbians to choose their Medicare services.

THE BACKGROUND

The Joint Health Professions Committee has been active since November 1993 and has met with David Kelly, Deputy Minister of Health, Deborah Morrow, former Director of the Supplementary Benefits Program and on two occasions with the Hon. Joy MacPhail, Minister of Health.

The majority of supplemental health services have been *covered by B.C. health insurance in one form or another since 1946*. The inclusion of health care services provided by optometrists, chiropractors, podiatrists, massage therapists, physiotherapists and naturopaths has strengthened the delivery of health care, providing universal access and comprehensive health care to all British Columbians.

British Columbia's Medical Services Plan pays a portion of the cost for some of these services, and requires patients to pay the remainder as a patient visit charge. This charge has grown from \$5.00 per visit in 1987 to \$10.00 today. Often the patient pays a greater portion than MSP.

Working with provincial statistics and figures, the JHP has analyzed the Supplementary Benefits Group on a per capita cost summary basis and concluded that a one-time monthly premium increase of approximately \$1.50 - \$2.00 per person would effectively provide appropriate medicare funding. This gives professionals the ability to continue delivering the most appropriate and effective care possible to their patients, without penalizing patients who cannot afford care. *Over 1.1 million British Columbians are affected by this year making the funding of medicare imperative.*

The JHP is actively seeking agreement in principle during the next 6 – 9 months for implementation no later than April 1, 2000 as a consequence of the Tax and Consumer Rate Freeze Act. This will give all British Columbians the most affordable access to vital health care services.

THE COMMITTEE

The JHP is comprised of:

- B.C. Chiropractic Association
- Massage Therapists' Association of B.C.
- B.C. Naturopathic Association
- B.C. Association of Podiatrists
- B.C. Association of Optometrists
- B.C. Pharmacy Association
- Federation of Dental Societies
- Physiotherapy Association of B.C. *

* Although part of the supplemental health benefits program, physiotherapists have elected to represent their own interests at this time.