



The Right Honourable Mark Carney
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
Ottawa, Ontario

Dear Prime Minister,

The National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) writes with profound concern about Alberta's *Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2)* and the broader risk it creates for the future of public health care in Canada. Alberta's legislation introduces a dual practice model that allows physicians to participate in both the public system and private-pay care, raising serious concerns about compliance with the *Canada Health Act* and about equal access to medically necessary services.

NCWC recognizes that health systems across the country are under pressure. Wait times are too long, health human resources are strained, and patients are frustrated.

Nevertheless, the answer cannot be to weaken the principles that have long defined Medicare in Canada: public administration, comprehensiveness, universality, portability, and accessibility, together with the prohibition on extra-billing and user charges.

Our particular focus is on the impact this shift could have on women and families. Women are often the ones who delay their own care to protect household finances, who shoulder caregiving responsibilities for children, elders, and relatives with disabilities, and who are more likely to experience harm when medically necessary care becomes harder to obtain or more expensive to access. When public care is diluted and private payment expands, families with fewer financial resources bear the greatest burden.

The *Canada Health Act* was created to ensure that people receive medically necessary hospital and physician services without financial barriers and on uniform terms and conditions. Health Canada's own interpretation makes clear that extra-billing and user charges are barriers to access, and the Act provides for deductions in federal transfers where such charges are permitted.

Reports examining Alberta's Bill 11 argue that allowing physicians to charge privately for medically necessary services risks creating a two-tier system in which faster access is increasingly linked to ability to pay rather than medical need. They further warn that such a

model may pull time and capacity away from the publicly funded system on which most Canadians rely.

For NCWC, this is not only a policy concern but a question of fairness, social cohesion, and the well-being of households across the country. Canadians should not face a future in which a mother postpones treatment because of cost, a senior waits longer because providers are drawn into private payment streams, or families must choose between health care and basic living expenses.

Accordingly, NCWC respectfully calls on the Government of Canada to:

- Conduct a formal review of Alberta's *Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2025 (No. 2)* for compliance with the *Canada Health Act*.
- Publicly affirm that medically necessary care must remain available based on need, not ability to pay.
- Urge the Government of Alberta to pause implementation of measures that permit private payment for insured services while federal review is underway.
- Use all appropriate federal measures available under the *Canada Health Act* to protect accessibility, universality, and equity in health care across Canada.

Canada's health care system is a defining public commitment. It must be strengthened, modernized, and properly funded, but not opened to practices that erode equal access. NCWC urges your government to act decisively to protect the *Canada Health Act* and to safeguard a health system that women, families, and all people in Canada can rely upon with confidence.

Respectfully,

Penny Rankin
NCWC President

NCWC: 613- 712-4419

CC. Minister of Health Marjorie Michel marjorie.michel@parl.gc.ca

NCWC Mission:

To empower all women to work together toward improving the quality of life for women, families, and society through a forum of member organizations and individuals