



**Association canadienne des enseignantes et des enseignants retraités
Canadian Association of Retired Teachers**

July 7, 2014

Dear Leaders of ACER-CART's Association Members:

September 8, 2014 will be the first day of a court case that threatens the Canadian public health care system. "Even though the attack has been launched in BC," says Rick Turner, retired teacher and co-chair of the BC Health Coalition, "it takes aim at the very cornerstones of Medicare, mandated by the Canada Health Act, which have been put in place by every province."

Dr. Brian Day, former President of the Canadian Medical Association and current owner/operator of two private healthcare clinics in Vancouver, is challenging the constitutionality of British Columbia's ban on private health care. At the heart of the case is whether patients, if they can't get timely care in the public system, should be able to pay, with cash or through private insurance, for care in private clinics. Dr. Day refers to the Canadian public health care system as the "medical enslavement of patients", and he says he doesn't know how the government will be able to defend Medicare.

ACER-CART joins the majority of the citizens of our country in the firm belief that all Canadians have a right to health care based on need, and not contingent on the ability to pay. ACER-CART believes strongly that this right is reflected in the structure of our universal, single public insurer health care system.

S.A. Keindler, in a synthesis of international evidence published in 2010 in the British Medical Bulletin, claims that as medical personnel are drawn away from providing public care, the two-tier system that results leads to longer wait times and poorer health care. And the BC Health Coalition claims that, indeed, "there is no evidence that private, for-profit care results in better care -- not anywhere in the world."

Canadian Doctors for Medicare and the BC Health Coalition are interveners in this case against the BC Government, and as such, they have been working to mount evidence that will enable them to speak strongly in defence of Medicare. They are appealing for financial assistance to facilitate the presentation of crucial evidence from expert witnesses who will strengthen the defence. This evidence includes the testimonies of Professor Marie-Claude Premont, who will give evidence that restraints on Medicare after Quebec's Chaoulli case compromises patient access to care; and Dr. David Himmelstien, visiting professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, who will present

evidence from the US health care system experience to show that for-profit health care would have serious health care cost ramifications for Canadians. US-based insurance companies are poised to jump on the opportunity to invest in a more private health care sector in Canada.

Support for the interveners in this case is crucial, as it is believed that evidence and facts provided at the trial stage in British Columbia will become the record upon which a Supreme Court of Canada decision will be made.

A motion at this year's AGM directed ACER-CART to appeal to association members to join ACER-CART in its financial contribution of \$500 to this initiative. It is in this spirit that we encourage you, as organizations and individuals, to support, if possible, the Canadian Doctors for Medicare and the BC Health Coalition as they build their defence.

Much information can be found online about the Dr. Brian Day court case; and following, for your convenience, are both the address for an online donation form and a postal address for the BC Health Coalition.

<http://www.bchealthcoalition.ca/donate-legal-defense>

**BC Health Coalition
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The court case is set to begin in Vancouver in early September and is estimated to be in session for eighteen weeks. It is anticipated that concerned citizens, including members of the BC Retired Teachers Association, will rally in huge numbers outside the courthouse on September 8 and on the days following. They will be there to raise awareness of this dangerous challenge to our Medicare system.

Thank you in advance for your possible support in defence of a system that we Canadians consider to be a defining manifestation of who we are as a caring and compassionate people.

Sincerely,



JoAnn Lauber President