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For Immediate Release*

**Dr. Day's Election a Disappointment:
Will Be a Catalyst for a Renewed Campaign to Support the Gains of Public
Medicare**

Toronto – The Ontario Health Coalition reacted with disappointment to the election of Dr. Brian Day as president elect for the Canadian Medical Association this morning.

“The choice of the delegates is an unfortunate one for the majority of patients in Canada,” noted Natalie Mehra, director of the Ontario Health Coalition. “Brian Day has spent years advocating for the dismantling of the public health system through privatization and the de-listing of health services. These are not innovative ideas. They are old ones relentlessly pushed by the small but well-heeled group who have personal business interests in promoting privatization. We are deeply disappointed.”

“The pretense that two tier advocates are concerned about wait lists is stunningly disingenuous. In fact, the two-tier proposal would quickly turn a doctor and health professional shortage situation into a crisis as physicians and health professionals would be siphoned out of the public health system to serve queue-jumpers in the private system. Two-tiering encourages wealthy people to purchase unnecessary procedures while those in real need languish on longer wait lists in the public system. Two tiering means that regional disparities in access to care intensify as more health professionals move into private businesses in larger cities where they can make money. While the greediest physician-turned-businesspeople make more money, patients suffer,” she added. “No one with an accurate understanding of the demand and supply of health resources and the well-being of the majority of Canadians in mind could advocate for destroying the gains and efficiency of the public health system through this type of privatization.”

“In response to Dr. Day's election, we need to reach out to physicians with the world-wide evidence that for-profit health care costs more for less care. We will use this opportunity to remind people that those who are pushing privatization almost inevitably are those who stand to profit directly from the higher costs of private health businesses. With redoubled urgency, we will communicate a clear message that the creation of a parallel system for those who buy private health insurance or pay out-of-pocket for procedures are actually advocating for dismantling public health care - not improving it. We need to remind physicians and Canadians alike that the values that underlie our public health system are sound and critically important for our communities and our economy.”

“Dr. Day's election will no doubt embolden those that want to profit from privatization. For advocates of public health care, it will be a catalyst for us to re-dedicate ourselves to the fight to protect the economic and social gains made when Canadians adopted our public health system,” she concluded.

For more information contact 416-441-2502.