

ASYMETRICAL FEDERALISM THAT RESPECTS QUEBEC'S JURISDICTION

Ottawa, September 15, 2004. Quebec supports the overall objectives and general principles set out by the federal, provincial and territorial first ministers in the communiqué of September 15, 2004, including the objectives of timely access to quality care and reduced wait times.

Recognizing the Government of Quebec's desire to exercise its own responsibilities with respect to planning, organizing and managing health services within its territory, and noting that its commitment with regard to the underlying principles of its public health system – universality, portability, comprehensiveness, accessibility and public administration – coincides with that of all governments in Canada, and resting on asymmetrical federalism, that is, flexible federalism that notably allows for the existence of specific agreements and arrangements adapted to Quebec's specificity, the Prime Minister of Canada and the Premier of Quebec have agreed that Quebec's support for the joint communiqué following the federal-provincial-territorial first ministers' meeting is to be interpreted and implemented as follows:

- Quebec will apply its own wait time reduction plan, in accordance with the objectives, standards and criteria established by the relevant Quebec authorities, including health human resources management, family and community care reform, home care, drug access strategies, and health promotion and chronic illness prevention strategies. With respect to wait times, evidence-based benchmarks established by December 31, 2005, will help Quebec have a more effective action plan. Quebec will pursue its objective of providing more first dollar coverage for short-term acute home care, short-term acute community mental health home care and palliative care, in accordance with its financial capacity.

- The Government of Quebec will report to Quebecers on progress in achieving its objectives, and will use comparable indicators, mutually agreed to with other governments. In this respect, Quebec will continue to work with other governments to develop new comparable indicators.
- Quebec's Health Commissioner is responsible for reporting to the Government of Quebec on Quebec's health system. He will cooperate with the Canadian Institute for Health Information.
- Funding made available by the Government of Canada will be used by the Government of Quebec to implement its own plan for renewing Quebec's health system.
- The Government of Quebec will continue to report to Quebecers on the use of all health funding.

In the health field, Quebec plans to continue to work closely with the provincial and territorial governments and with the federal government, on sharing information and best practices.

First ministers recognize that citizens are waiting too long to obtain health services. In recent years, Quebec has made efforts to allow Quebecers to access its services more rapidly. First Ministers agree that, to obtain results, health funding must be stable and predictable, to help improve current services and develop new ones.

Nothing in this communiqué shall be construed as derogating from Quebec's jurisdiction. This communiqué shall be interpreted as fully respecting its jurisdiction.