



CDA Position on Funding of Health and Dental Care

Preamble

The Canadian Dental Association (CDA) believes that all Canadians should have timely access to affordable health care. In Canada, dental and supplemental health benefits have traditionally been provided to the vast majority of Canadians through private health and dental plans, funded by employers and public plans funded at either the provincial or federal level which target special groups of Canadians. Notwithstanding the funding mechanism, CDA believes that treatment decisions must remain with the dentist/physician and the patient.

The Canadian tax system provides an additional financial incentive for employer-sponsored plans. The resulting widespread take-up has had an extremely positive effect on Canada's standard of oral health, which is one of the best in the world. Preventive dental care - cleaning, checkups and early diagnosis - on a regular basis has been a core feature of traditional employer-sponsored dental plans.

In providing the tax incentive, the Government of Canada has become a partner, through Parliament, with employers, employees, plan providers and dentistry in a private sector system which has functioned admirably for more than a generation, providing a means of quality care within a framework of controlled costs.

Canadian dentistry has made its contribution both in terms of the quality of care delivered through dental plans and by controlling cost increases for preventive dental care coverage. Prices for these services have increased less than the overall increases in Canada's Consumer Price Index for the past dozen years. CDA has recommended to Government the continuation of the current partnership tax incentive to employer-sponsored health and dental plans, and the extension of this incentive to unincorporated, self-employed plan participants.

The current Canadian system for health care delivery calls on the resources of both the public and the private sectors and attempts to use them in the best interest of all concerned. CDA believes that incremental improvement to a basically sound model can be accomplished only through a comprehensive review.

Position

The Canadian Dental Association supports optimal oral health for all Canadians, provided through a delivery system which is open and flexible. Public funding has been most appropriate where ability to pay is a barrier to access. The CDA will continue to work with government and other stakeholders to provide affordable access to oral health for all Canadians and believes that this can be best accomplished through improvements to the existing private and public delivery systems. No fundamental changes to the current delivery systems in Canada should take place without full parliamentary consultation with all stakeholders.

*Approved
CDA Board of Directors
February 2005*

References available on request