

# A Brief History of Canada's Health Care System

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- 1947** -- The Saskatchewan Government, led by leader Tommy Douglas, introduces the first provincial hospital insurance program in Canada.
- 1957** -- Paul Martin Sr. introduces a national hospital insurance program. Doctors, insurance companies and big business fight against it.
- 1960** -- The Canadian Medical Association opposes all publicly funded health care.
- 1962** -- Saskatchewan's NDP government introduces the first public health care program. Doctors walk out but the strike collapses after 3 weeks.
- 1965** -- A Royal Commission headed by Emmett Hall calls for a universal and comprehensive national health insurance program.
- 1966** -- Parliament creates a national Medicare program with Ottawa paying 50% of provincial health costs.
- 1977** -- Trudeau Liberals retreat from 50:50 cost-sharing and replace it with block funding.
- 1978** -- Doctors begin "extra-billing" to raise their incomes.
- 1979** -- Canadian Labour Congress convenes the SOS Medicare conference to fight extra-billing and joins with community groups to form the Canadian Health Coalition.
- 1984** -- Canada Health Act is passed unanimously by parliament. Extra-billing is banned.
- 1993** -- Mulroney government grants 20-year patent protection to brand name drugs.
- 1995** -- Paul Martin Jr. introduces Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST), causing massive cuts in transfer payments to health and social programs.
- 1997** -- National Forum on Health calls for Medicare to be expanded to include home care, pharmacare and a phasing out of fee-for-service for doctors.
- 1998** -- Premiers demand say in interpreting the Canada Health Act. Chrétien caves in.
- 2000** -- Ralph Klein introduces legislation to allow private hospitals.
- 2000** -- Federal Budget offers 2 cents for health care for every dollar of tax cuts, ignoring pleas of Canadians to save Medicare.
- 2002** -- The Romanow Royal Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada conducted cross-country public hearings. Final report was tabled in Ottawa on November 28, 2002.
- 2003** -- First Ministers' meeting results in a new 'Health Accord.' Targeted funding in key areas (as prescribed by the Romanow report) shows promise. However, there are no accountability mechanisms and no restrictions on public funding being spent on for-profit health care.

