

November 8, 2005

### **Health Minister clarifies released documents**

The documents released today by the Opposition are working documents only. They do not represent government policy. They do represent some of the options this government is currently exploring.

We do have an agenda, and that is to give Albertans what they have asked for - improved access and greater choice in health care. We want to ensure Albertans continue to have a high quality health care system at a sustainable cost into the future.

The slide presentation the Opposition believes to be a concrete plan was simply an analysis of options for government to consider. It is vital that policy makers know, and be able to discuss, all options before making decisions. This document was meant to facilitate that discussion.

One of the options the presentation explains is allowing doctors to work in both the public system and privately, just as they do in some other provinces. It is unfortunate the Opposition chose to release these documents in this fashion. The policy options the documents contain need to be discussed in greater detail with all stakeholders including the Alberta Medical Association and the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

The second document summarizes both what we have already achieved in our Third Way, and what we expect to announce over the next two months. Of 14 initiatives listed in the document, the Opposition chose to focus on one designed to do two things: first, to inform Albertans how many of their tax dollars go to services not required under the *Canada Health Act*. Currently, this amounts to almost one-third of Alberta's current \$9 billion health care budget.

Second, we also want this information campaign to help Albertans understand that if we are going to have a public health care system capable of delivering high quality services in the future, they must understand the cost pressures that our system faces today. Staying healthy is one of the foundation stones of the Third Way. I have said many times that we all have to take greater responsibility in taking care of our health, rather than looking at health care as simply an entitlement.

I want to assure Albertans that when decisions are made, we will be making those decisions fully public. In the meantime, we are moving ahead on the Third Way to health care renewal. Alberta's Third Way in health care is about accessible, high quality health care services with more choice and at a cost sustainable into the future. This government will continue encouraging a much-needed open discussion both within government and across the province on this key issue that affects all Albertans.

Iris Evans, Minister

- 30 -

Copies of the documents released today are available on the Alberta Health and Wellness website at [www.health.gov.ab.ca](http://www.health.gov.ab.ca).

**Media enquiries may be directed to:**

Mark Kastner  
Alberta Health and Wellness

(780) 974-4658

To call toll free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

---

Alberta Government Home | Ministries Listing | Health and Wellness Home Page | News Releases [Top of Page](#)

---

Send us your comments or questions

Copyright(c); 2005 Government of Alberta

Return to Government Home Page

Return to Government Home Page

Return to Government Home Page

Return to Government Home Page

Return to Government Home Page

Return to Government Home Page

Return to Government Home Page

Return to Government Home Page

Return to [Government Home Page](#)