

April 20, 2006

New health bill process invites Albertans' input

Calgary... The Government of Alberta will table legislation for the purposes of ongoing consultation. The decision was made by caucus after a presentation by Health and Wellness Minister Iris Evans that outlined what was heard from Albertans during consultations in March, as well as from a recent poll.

The Health Care Assurance Act will serve as a legislative framework. The Act will consolidate Alberta's current patchwork of health legislation and would:

- Ensure Albertans have access to their health system when they need it
- Allow government to establish a process for determining essential services
- Provide greater flexibility in the roles of health care providers and health facilities
- Provide flexibility to introduce new compensation models for health care providers

The Health Care Assurance Act will be introduced during the spring session of the Alberta Legislature.

"The decision to table the legislation follows through on our commitment. We pledged to consult with Albertans, we pledged to table the legislation. I pledge to continue the consultation and to listen to what Albertans have to say about the future of health care," said Minister of Health and Wellness, Iris Evans.

Evans also released two documents "What We Heard" and "Highlights of Alberta government polling" related to the Health Policy Framework.

Albertans were supportive of eight of the 10 policy directions in the Health Policy Framework. Based on what was heard, the framework will be revised to:

- Emphasize Alberta's workforce and the need to attract and retain health care professionals in both our cities and rural communities;
- Not proceed with private health insurance at this time;
- Not proceed with allowing doctors to work in both public and private systems at this time.

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Attachments: What We Heard document, Highlights of Alberta government polling.

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