

April 29, 2010

***Revised* - Consultation begins on Alberta Health Act**

Public input sought as work on new health legislation begins

Edmonton ... Consultation on new Alberta health legislation is underway and Albertans are urged to provide their ideas on recommendations for the forthcoming Alberta Health Act.

Honourable Gene Zwozdesky, Minister of Health and Wellness, appointed MLA Fred Horne to lead the consultation process on behalf of government. He will submit a final report to the Minister this fall.

“Our Premier and our government are fully committed to a strong, publicly funded health system and we want the views of Albertans reflected in this new legislation,” said Zwozdesky. “We also have to update Alberta’s current health legislation. This consultation process is an opportunity for Albertans to have a meaningful say regarding how to implement the recommendations of the Minister’s Advisory Committee on Health.”

A 8-member advisory committee has been formed to assist Horne over the next 5 months. The committee will identify policy issues that government needs to address, provide advice on the new legislation, and assist Horne with development of the report.

“I’m looking forward to hearing what people think about the principles proposed by the Minister’s Advisory Committee on Health, what Albertans want to see in their patient charter, their thoughts about new legislation and how they want to be consulted in the future,” said Horne.

Albertans are invited to visit yourhealthact.alberta.ca throughout the spring and summer for updated information on the consultation process and to provide input. Horne and the advisory committee will also consult directly with health-care providers and other key stakeholders. In June, the 12 local Health Advisory Councils will host a series of community-based consultations across Alberta to seek input about the forthcoming health legislation.

MLA Horne will present a report to Minister Zwozdesky by September 30, 2010, that reflects what was heard from Albertans, as well as a detailed plan on how to move forward.

In its report last January, the Minister’s Advisory Committee on Health recommended that a new law, the Alberta Health Act, be built around core principles. The committee also recommended a patient charter, the affirmation of *Canada Health Act* principles, consolidation of core legislation, stronger support for evidence-based decision making and ongoing citizen engagement. The Minister accepted all 4 recommendations on behalf of the government in January.

The Alberta government has a clear plan for a strong economic recovery. An important part of *The Way Forward* is maintaining support for programs and services Albertans need most, such as health care, education and safe and vibrant communities. For more information on the plan visit Alberta.ca.

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Revised: This news release was amended on May 6, 2010.

Question and answer backgrounder attached.

Media inquiries may be directed to:

Gene Zwozdesky, Minister
Alberta Health and Wellness
780-446-1144 (cell)

Fred Horne, MLA
Edmonton - Rutherford
780-414-1311

Andy Weiler
Communications
Health and Wellness
780-719-9325 (cell)

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Questions and answers about the consultation process

Questions and answers about the consultation process

1. Q: Why is new health legislation needed?

In January, the Minister's Advisory Committee on Health reported what Albertans and stakeholders had told them about health legislation in Alberta. The committee recommended that a new law, the Alberta Health Act, be developed around core principles. It also recommended a patient charter, the affirmation of

Canada Health Act principles, consolidation of core legislation, stronger support for evidence-based decision making and ongoing citizen engagement. The advisory committee concluded that new legislation was necessary to shift the health system from one that is built around institutions and health providers to one that better recognizes and responds to people and families needing health services. The Alberta government accepted all of the committee's recommendations.

2. Q: Who are the members of the advisory committee for this next phase of consultation?

- MLA Fred Horne, Chair
- Deborah E. Prowse, Patient Safety Advocate
- Dr. Trevor Theman, Registrar, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta
- Ms. Mary-Anne Robinson, Chief Executive Officer, College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta
- Mr. Greg Eberhart, Registrar, College of Pharmacists of Alberta
- Mr. Dan MacLennan, former President, Alberta Union of Provincial Employees
- Dr. Tom Feasby, Dean, Faculty of Medicine University of Calgary
- Dr. John Cowell, President and CEO, Health Quality Council of Alberta
- Mr. Greer Black, Past President, Alberta Continuing Care Association.

3. Q: What is the role of the advisory committee?

The advisory committee has been named to support MLA Fred Horne in 3 important areas:

- Identifying and providing input on key policy issues related to forthcoming legislation;
- Facilitating consultation with health system stakeholders; and
- Providing input regarding the development of the final report.

4. Q: What will the consultation process look like?

There are 4 consultation methods:

- Web-based - a survey and background information is available at yourhealthact.alberta.ca
- Advisory Committee - the committee will assist in soliciting input from stakeholders;
- Stakeholders - meetings will be held with health-care providers and stakeholder groups; and

- Health Advisory Councils - Alberta's 12 Health Advisory Councils will host community-based consultations in June.

5. Q: What is the timeline on this consultation?

A report that reflects what was heard from Albertans, as well as a detailed plan to move forward, will be presented by MLA Fred Horne to the Minister of Health and Wellness by September 30.

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