

Wednesday, August 20, 2014
Mercredi, le 20 août 2014
Canadian Medical Association General Council
Conseil général de l'Association médicale canadienne
Ottawa, Ontario

LA VERSION PRONONCÉE FAIT FOI
CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Thank you, Lou.

I want to thank Lou for his hard work on behalf of Canadians, and I want to congratulate incoming CMA President Dr. Chris Simpson.

I know Chris will be a credit to the Canadian Medical Association.

Thank you both.

As Lou said, he and I did go to elementary school together.

Even then, we all knew Lou was destined to be a doctor.

I will say, though, it was little weird that he wore the white lab coat to school every day in Grade 1.

But he stuck with it and here he is.

Quand je dis aux gens que le président de l'Association médicale canadienne et moi avons étudié à la même école primaire, ils me répondent :

« Il doit y avoir quelque chose dans l'eau à l'École Sacré-Cœur de L'Abord-à-Plouffe! »

Justement, Lou prévoit mener un test à double insu contrôlé par placebo pour déterminer exactement quels produits sont mis dans l'eau de l'école.

Lou, je te promets que notre gouvernement néo-démocrate va financer ce test.

It's truly an honour to be here with you today.

And I'm proud to be the first Leader of the Official Opposition to be asked to address the General Council.

For 147 years, since our country was in its infancy, this body has set the course for medicine in Canada and for the health of Canadians.

From the founding of our party, healthcare has been a core principle, when a Baptist preacher named Tommy Douglas dreamed of a world where no parent would ever have to choose between paying the rent and taking a sick child to see the doctor.

To the work that all of you do each and every day to make that dream a reality.

Healthcare, our commitment to take care of each other, has come to define us as Canadians.

It's come to shape our most basic common values.

And even as healthcare and medicine are facing a time of great change, those values will continue to inspire everything we do.

A free, universal, portable, public healthcare system is still our most cherished public institution.

A system that ensures every Canadian has access to the care they need, regardless of their ability to pay.

Today, that system is facing a dramatic challenge, the most significant demographic shift our country has ever seen.

And, at the same time, we face a government here in Ottawa more interested in de-funding public healthcare, than protecting it.

In dictating to provinces and providers rather than working with them.

In just the last week, we've seen two examples of this heavy handed and demagogic approach.

They unsuccessfully tried to recruit Canadian doctors in their ideological crusade against marijuana.

And they tried to force doctors to decide who should and shouldn't get home mail delivery.

That's not governing. That's bullying.

And I'm proud that, in each and every case, the CMA was there to stand up for doctors and stand up for Canadians.

We face big challenges, but we know these are challenges we can meet.

Voilà pourquoi il était si important que l'AMC adopte et fasse la promotion de sa stratégie nationale sur les soins aux aînés qui est coparrainée par la CARP.

Je suis fier de pouvoir dire que le NPD a également adopté une telle stratégie.

Nous sommes le seul parti fédéral, oui, le seul, à avoir proposé une stratégie nationale sur le vieillissement et une stratégie nationale en matière de soins palliatifs.

Our Health critic and Deputy Leader Libby Davies conducted a yearlong consultation on the renewal of Canada's Health Accords.

She's engaged with Canadians from coast-to-coast-to-coast on everything from prescription drug coverage to the social determinants of health.

We're confronting a staggering challenge.

A challenge that will take a flat out effort to meet, at every level of government, in every profession and every discipline.

But it's a challenge matched only by the innovation and transformation that's already happening in every field of medicine.

From electronic health records and telemedicine to integrated patient care to scope of practice, an issue I know the physicians in the room are seized with right now, the medical community is leading the way.

What our medical professionals need, what you deserve, is a federal government that will be a partner in making that change.

Évidemment, le principal engagement du fédéral en matière de santé doit être de veiller à honorer ses responsabilités.

Cela signifie, d'abord et avant tout, de fournir des soins aux anciens combattants, aux militaires, aux Premières Nations et aux réfugiés.

La récente décision du gouvernement fédéral de supprimer le financement des soins de santé aux réfugiés était aussi cruelle qu'irréfléchie.

Cette décision était d'une cruauté si flagrante que les tribunaux l'ont infirmée.

Mais certains défis sont plus complexes.

L'état des soins de santé dans plusieurs réserves et communautés autochtones éloignées est épouvantable, et cela dure depuis des décennies.

Heureusement, il s'agit justement d'un des secteurs où les innovations, comme la télémédecine, peuvent s'avérer très efficaces, ce sont les informations qui se déplacent, plutôt que les patients.

Je sais que l'AMC est une pionnière dans la promotion de ces innovations.

I'm also so glad to see the CMA honouring the contribution of doctors, nurses and other medical professionals in the Canadian Forces this year.

Our military is grappling with the impact of a decade of war in Afghanistan.

A wave of new veterans.

Women and men who risked their lives in service to others.

They need, they deserve, our full support.

That's why, earlier this year, I wrote to the prime minister asking him to make military suicides and mental health a personal priority.

He never bothered to respond.

We called on him to reverse \$200 million in cuts his budget made to Veterans Affairs.

To date, that call has fallen on deaf ears.

We pleaded with the government to reverse the closure of 9 veterans' service centres across the country.

They shut one-by-one.

We're talking about our veterans, our military.

They fought for us, it's time we fought for them.

We will re-open those 9 veterans' services centres.

We will do right our women and men in uniform.

And you can rest assured that, for me, that is a personal priority.

Le gouvernement fédéral a également un rôle clé à jouer pour agir sur les déterminants sociaux de la santé.

Le NPD est le premier parti à avoir lancé une stratégie alimentaire pancanadienne qui fait le pont entre les intervenants afin de veiller à ce que les Canadiens aient accès à des aliments sains et abordables.

Il est inacceptable, dans un pays aussi riche que le Canada, que 800 000 jeunes se rendent à l'école chaque matin sans avoir mangé.

Je suis fier de dire que nous avons mené la charge contre le projet des conservateurs de hausser à 67 ans l'âge de la retraite — ce qui obligerait les plus démunis à travailler deux ans de plus, souvent dans des emplois physiquement très exigeants.

But, of course, we all know the scale of the challenges we face extends well beyond federal jurisdiction.

It's become cliché to say that money alone won't solve the problems in our healthcare system, that money has to buy change.

But, let's be honest, we'll never solve any of these problems.

We'll never play a constructive role with our provincial partners.

If we return to an era of crippling cuts.

After promising to protect all future increase to provincial transfers, Conservatives announced plans to cut \$36 billion starting in 2016.

A return to the dark days of the 1990s.

We can do better.

Canadians deserve better.

Money may not be the solution for every problem facing our healthcare system.

But it is definitely a necessary pre-condition.

This spring, Conservatives will announce, with great fanfare, that there is now a budget surplus.

I'm here today to tell you that an NDP government would use any such surplus to, first and foremost, cancel those proposed cuts to healthcare.

Mr. Harper, it's time keep your word to protect Canadian healthcare.

After giving Canada's richest corporations \$50 billion in tax breaks, don't you dare take \$36 billion out of healthcare to pay for them!

À lui seul, l'argent ne peut pas régler tous les problèmes auxquels notre système de santé est confronté.

Mais sans argent, on ne pourra régler aucun de ces problèmes.

Les conservateurs annonceront ce printemps, en grande pompe qu'il y a maintenant un excédent budgétaire.

Je suis ici aujourd'hui pour vous dire qu'un gouvernement néo-démocrate se servirait de cet excédent pour annuler les compressions proposées aux soins de santé.

M. Harper, il est temps que vous respectiez votre parole et que vous protégiez les soins de santé au Canada.

Après avoir offert aux sociétés canadiennes les plus riches 50 milliards \$ en allègements fiscaux, il serait honteux que vous preniez 36 milliards \$ dévoués aux soins de santé pour les payer.

Depuis la création du régime public de santé au Canada, le système a toujours été plus efficace lorsque le fédéral collaborait avec les provinces et les fournisseurs, plutôt que de leur dire quoi faire.

Just as Medicare itself was pioneered by an NDP government in Saskatchewan and adopted across Canada with the support of all parties at the federal level.

Today, the federal government can play the same role: providing the leadership and resources to share the practices that work on the ground and in the provinces with patients right across the country.

That's the kind of bold, progressive vision we should expect from our federal government.

And it's the kind of support you deserve, and Canadians demand.

Together we are entering a new era for Canadian medicine.

We can protect and renew the promise of Canadian healthcare.

The simple premise that as Canadians we take care of one another, we lift each other up.

In the last century, we made that dream a reality.

Now, we have to safeguard it for generations to come.

Thank you. Merci. On continue.