

Press Release: For immediate release

Election 2011; Canada's health centres release federal party responses on commitments to health care

April 26th, 2011 (Ottawa) Canada's political parties have responded to a five-point questionnaire asking them to describe their commitment to key issues affecting the health and health care of Canadians. The parties' responses were released today by the Canadian Alliance of Community Health Centre Associations (CACHCA), a group that advances community-based health care innovations across Canada.

"We are very pleased to see strong commitments to preserving Canada's publicly-funded health system and to improving the quality of health care for Canadians through several new and innovative federal health programs," stated CACHCA's Chairperson, Jack McCarthy. "We are particularly heartened to see recognition of the impact made by community health centres in Canada, and openness on the part of several parties about the need for a strong network of community health centres across the country. This is really critical to improve access for Canadians to the sort of high-quality health care they want and deserve."

McCarthy also described some of the association's concerns. He underscored the fact that the Conservative Party of Canada was the only political party that refused to respond to the election questions, noting that they were also the lone hold out when the Canadian association issued a similar questionnaire during the 2008 federal election.

"Despite many of the positive and thoughtful responses we received, what alarms us most is that for the second consecutive election, the Conservative Party has refused to respond to key questions about the health of Canadians. Not allowing Canadians to hear the party's views on important health and health care issues is not only a red flag, it is now a troubling pattern."

Issued to all of the parties in late March, CACHCA's 2011 election questionnaire touches on core public concerns such as the future of public funding for health care; the renewal of the Federal/Provincial Health Accord set to expire in 2014; the need to increase innovation within Canada's health system; and the urgency of reducing illness in Canada caused by poverty and the lack of affordable housing. Full responses from the political parties can be viewed at <http://www.cachca.ca/news/news.html>

Contact:

Jack McCarthy
Chairperson, CACHCA
(613) 238-8210

Scott A. Wolfe
Federal/Provincial Coordinator, CACHCA
(416) 839-0531

For further reference and information about the Canadian Alliance of Community Health Centre Associations (CACHCA) visit www.cachca.ca