

Quality health care delivery key election issue, says CMAJ

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Delivering quality health care rather than health care sustainability is a key issue for Canada's federal election, and Canadians need a vision from federal leaders to radically transform our health care system, states an editorial in *CMAJ* (*Canadian Medical Association Journal*).

While health care delivery is a provincial and territorial jurisdiction, renegotiation of Canada's health accord is a federal responsibility.

"Without hesitation, we should all ask how governments propose to deliver quality health care – arguably the most important issue this decade — because the 2003 First Ministers' Accord on Health Care Renewal and the 2004 10-Year Plan to Strengthen Health Care expire in 2014," writes Dr. Paul Hébert, Editor-in-Chief, *CMAJ*, with coauthors.

"Barring a fragile minority, the government we elect May 2 will lead the negotiations for a new accord and therefore have a powerful opportunity to help shape Canada's [health care system](#)," state the authors.

Safety, effectiveness, patient-centred care, timeliness, efficiency and equity are the six aspects of high-quality care that can help make Canada's health system cost-effective and sustainable if they are given priority.

Information is key to ensuring quality care, and an effective national electronic health record system is vital to this. Health prevention and promotion programs and transparent public reporting are also areas

where the federal government has a significant role to play.

"We need to shake off the habits and attitudes of 20th-century health care that have led to a narrowly focused, discontinuous and often wasteful system that doesn't do enough to prevent illness or promote overall health, often fails to satisfy patients and wears out the people who care for them," write the authors.

More information: <http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/doi/10.1503/cmaj.110540>

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