

Advice for Canada's new health minister

December 7 2015

Enact a national pharmacare program for Canadians. Let science and evidence guide health policy. Keep your promises. These are some of the recommendations that the editors of Canada's major medical journal, *CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal)*, make in an editorial to the new Minister of Health, Dr. Jane Philpott.

"We congratulate you on becoming Canada's new Minister of Health," writes CMAJ's editorial team of medical doctors. "As the first physician to hold this post in 80 years, your appointment is a historic achievement."

The editors are encouraged by the government's announcements to reinstate the long-form census, unmuzzle federal scientists and restore full [health coverage](#) for refugees—all issues for which *CMAJ* has advocated in recent years. However, the new government will be faced with substantial challenges.

The editors recommend:

- Keep your promises to follow through on these items as well as commitments to expand home care, address [mental health issues](#) and improve vaccination rates.
- Let science and evidence guide policy, and restore funding to Cochrane Canada.
- Implement a national pharmacare program to give Canadians the medicines they need.
- Defend the Canada Health Act.

- Focus on the social determinants of health, working with other government ministries.

"Last, never forget that you are a physician. You carry with you the values and responsibilities of our profession—most saliently the expectation to advocate for the health and well-being of Canadians," the [editors](#) conclude.

More information: www.cmaj.ca/lookup/doi/10.1503/cmaj.151398

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