

# Medicare: Accountable... Accessible... Public.



## *A strong, public health care system makes good economic sense*

**T**here are many benefits to a publicly funded health system, including better care, delivered more efficiently, at a lower cost. However, there is increasing evidence that our Medicare system is also helping create better jobs for Canadian workers.

For example, in July 2005, Toyota announced plans to locate a plant in Woodstock, Ontario instead of in the United States (our cost saving national health insurance plan is widely believed to be a central reason for the move).

Publicly funded health care gives Canadian companies a huge advantage, as their health care costs are much lower than those of their US counterparts that provide health benefits to employees. As the high cost of private health benefits continues to rise, we can expect to see some of these US firms begin to look northward.

We need to spend more on health care but we also need to spend more wisely, where it is needed most. For example, the federal government could help reduce the strain on hospitals through expanding public homecare and encouraging the use of community health centres. Long term health care costs would also be reduced through the establishment of a national Pharmacare plan.

This election is an opportunity for Canadians to make their candidates take a stand to protect, strengthen and expand our Medicare system. Let's let our candidates know that we want a fully public health care system and that we expect them to spend our tax dollars wisely.

## **Ask the candidates**

- What measures will your government take to strengthen and expand public health care?
- Do you support a national Pharmacare programme?
- What will your government do to raise public awareness of the economic value of a strong, national health care system?

