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Canadian Union of Public Employees **CUPE.ca**

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CUPE calls on federal Liberals to step up to ensure adequate health care funding

Ottawa, Ont – As health ministers from across Canada meet with the federal health minister to discuss a new Health Accord, CUPE calls on the federal Liberal government to step up and ensure adequate funding for hospitals and health care in Canada by boosting the Canada Health Transfer (CHT).

“Our federal government needs to step up to the plate and reverse the cuts to health care funding the Harper government set in motion,” said CUPE National President Mark Hancock. “To miss this opportunity to improve health care funding would be a disaster for Canadians who have already seen cuts to health care under the current funding system.”

“We need a national pharmacare program to help Canadians deal with ever-increasing drug costs, and we need adequate standards of care from coast to coast,” said Hancock. “These necessary improvements will never happen if the federal government does not come to the table with improved funding. And that funding should come with strings attached for the provinces, to stop privatization and eliminate user fees in our public health care system.”

“Our members are on the front lines delivering health care across Canada, and they have seen the result of funding restraint,” said Hancock. “The results have been a push to privatize, introduce user fees and cut programs or contract out services – all of which have a negative impact on the quality of care.”

At a minimum, CUPE is calling for a six per cent funding escalator to maintain existing programs and protect public health care, a commitment to uphold the principles of the Canada Health Act and stop violations of the Act by charging patients thousands of dollars in user fees for diagnostics and surgeries, and real progress and a timetable for a national pharmacare program, and improvements to home care and long-term care.

For further information, please contact:

Charles Brenchley
CUPE Communications
613-806-3872
cbrenchley@cupe.ca