

Health Council of Canada Offers Canadians Their Own Story Amidst Commonwealth Fund Data

TORONTO, ON - July 19, 2010 - The Health Council of Canada is pleased that Commonwealth Fund data in the report, *Mirror, Mirror on the Wall: How the Performance of the U.S. Health Care System Compares Internationally*, compelled André Picard in a *Globe and Mail* update on July 14, 2010, to surface key areas for improvement in Canada's health care system. Picard found that Canada needs to do better in delivering health care across a number of fronts: emergency room visits, hospital readmission rates, electronic health records, medication errors, and co-ordination of care – among other indicators of a quality health care system.

These and further discoveries from the Commonwealth Fund data have been at the root of the Health Council's first three bulletins in our Canadian Health Care Matters series. According to John G. Abbott, CEO of the of Health Council Canada, "Rather than look at the data through an American lens, we have told the unique stories the data reveal about Canadians' experiences with their own health care system."

Our first bulletin was *Safer Health Care for "Sicker" Canadians: International Comparisons of Health Care Quality and Safety* (November 2009). It showed the vast majority of Canadians who are already in poor health say the quality of the care they personally receive is good to excellent, but more than half feel that fundamental changes are needed to improve our health care system.

Our second bulletin, *Helping Patients Help Themselves: Are Canadians with Chronic Conditions Getting the Support They Need to Manage Their Health?* (January 2010) showed many Canadians with chronic health conditions do not regularly receive some of the expected types of support that could help them better manage their own health.

Our third bulletin, *Beyond the Basics: The Importance of Patient-Provider Interactions in Chronic Illness Care* (April 2010) showed that having a regular doctor does not necessarily mean patients are receiving the safest or most supportive medical care. That doctor must also provide the basic elements of good primary care, two of which are: knowing their patient's history and helping to coordinate other aspects of their care.

"The Health Council is responding to Canadians who, having read some or all of these bulletins, tell us they find the Commonwealth Fund data useful in their personal decision- making and work," said John G. Abbott. "That is why in the new year we will report on data from the 2010 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey – to bring further insight into the performance of our highly valued health care system."

Background

The Health Council of Canada, created by the 2003 First Ministers' Accord on Health Care Renewal, reports on the progress of health care renewal in Canada and highlights best practices nation-wide. Councillors are appointed by the participating provinces, territories and the Government of Canada. To download reports and other Health Council materials, visit www.healthcouncilcanada.ca.

For additional information on this topic:

Bulletin 1, November 2009

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Bulletin Two, January 2010

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Bulletin Three, April 2010,

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