



THE PREMIER OF ALBERTA

April 24, 2002

The Right Honourable Jean Chretien, P.C., Q.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Langevin Block
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Chretien:

It is with pleasure that I write to you on behalf of Premiers, with the exception of Québec¹, with respect to your government's proposal for a dispute resolution mechanism in relation to the *Canada Health Act*. Premiers recently had an opportunity to consider the proposal outlined by the Honourable Anne McLellan to the Honourable Gary Mar in her letter of April 2nd. Premiers, with the exception of Québec, welcomed, and expressed their support for, the model outlined in Minister McLellan's letter.

We believe that the proposed process is consistent with the accord reached by First Ministers in February, 1999 concerning the Social Union Framework Agreement. We share your view that, in the first instance, governments should work together to avoid disputes. In the unfortunate circumstance that we are not able to resolve disputes, however, we are confident that this new process will allow us to settle disputes in a timely, fair, and transparent manner.

Prime Minister, I would like to commend you and your Minister of Health for your commitment to achieve a workable solution to this important issue. In federal/provincial/territorial discussions on this matter, we have always sought to develop a mechanism that is respectful of both provincial and territorial responsibilities with respect to health care and the federal government's commitments under the *Canada Health Act*. In our view, the development of this mechanism is a significant achievement and an important milestone in federal/provincial/territorial cooperative relations.

¹ The position of the Government of Québec: Québec isn't a signatory of the Social Union Framework Agreement and Québec governments have never recognized the *Canada Health Act* and its principles even though, in practice, Québec's health care services respect those principles.

We have many other matters of mutual interest on which we will be working in the coming weeks and months. One related matter is the third year review of the Social Union Framework Agreement. We are hopeful that this review process will be as mutually beneficial as the outcome of the health dispute settlement mechanism discussions.

Again, thank you for your support in achieving a successful conclusion to this matter.

Sincerely yours,



Ralph Klein

cc: Premiers

Honourable Gordon Campbell
Premier, British Columbia

Honourable Anne McLellan
Minister, Health Canada

Honourable Gary Mar, Q.C.
Minister of Health and Wellness

Honourable Haivar Jonson
Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations