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2016.05 Amend the *Canada Health Act* to Include Home Care as an Insured Health Service

Whereas, The *Canada Health Act* recognizes home care as an “extended health service” not an “insured health service” to which the principles of the Act apply; and

Whereas, Insured health services are fully funded by government and delivered based on the patient’s need, not their ability to pay; and

Whereas, Through its legislative role, the federal government can facilitate national approaches and standards that must be satisfied by provincial/territorial health care insurance plans; therefore, be it

Resolved, That national council of The Catholic Women’s League of Canada, in 96th annual national convention assembled, urge the federal government to amend the *Canada Health Act* to include home care as an insured health service.

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2 **BRIEF: Amend the *Canada Health Act* to Include Home Care as an Insured Health**
3 **Service**
4

5 The *Canada Health Act* distinguishes between “insured health services” and “extended health care
6 services” (Government of Canada). The Act “recognizes home care as an “extended health service” not an
7 insured service to which the principles of the Act apply” (The Canadian Home Care Association). “Home
8 care services are not publicly insured through the *Canada Health Act* in the same way as hospital and
9 physician services” (Health Canada).

10
11 “Roles and responsibilities for Canada's health care system are shared between the federal and provincial-
12 territorial governments” (Health Canada). “Under the *Canada Health Act* (CHA), our federal health
13 insurance legislation, criteria and conditions are specified that must be satisfied by the provincial and
14 territorial health care insurance plans in order for them to qualify for their full share of the federal cash
15 contribution, available under the Canada Health Transfer (CHT)” (ibid).

16
17 Insured health services are fully funded by government and delivered based on the patient’s need, not
18 their ability to pay. “Additional care and services may be paid for in whole or in part by provincial
19 policies, private insurers or by patients and families themselves” (Canadian Cancer Society). An
20 international report concludes that “while hospitalization is 100% funded by the government, home care
21 is still a considerable financial burden for people” (Canadian Cancer Society).

22
23 “In Canada, most home and community care services are delivered by provincial, territorial and some
24 municipal governments” (Health Canada). The definition for “home care” used by most provincial and
25 territorial governments is “an array of services for people of all ages, provided in the home and
26 community setting, that encompasses health promotion and teaching, curative intervention, end-of-life
27 care, rehabilitation, support and maintenance, social adaptation and integration, and support for family
28 caregivers” (The Canadian Home Care Association).

29
30 The goal of home and community care is to help people stay at or return home while receiving needed
31 treatment, rehabilitation or palliative care (Gov. of Canada). In 2012, just over 2.2 million Canadians,
32 aged 15 years or older, received some form of help in their home to cope with a long-term health
33 condition, disability or aging needs (Sinha, Bleakney). Home care was provided by slightly more than “8
34 million Canadians”, (short-term sickness is excluded) (Turcotte, 2013). “In most cases, care receivers
35 relied on the help of family and friends, though they often combined this care with help from
36 professionals” (Sinha, Bleakney). Women were the majority of caregivers (54%) (Statistics Canada).

37
38 Since home care is not an insured health service, provincial and territorial governments are not required to
39 fund it. “Access to these services and programs varies significantly—it depends on who you are and
40 where you live...” (Keefe). “Only four provinces (British Columbia, Ontario, Manitoba and Prince
41 Edward Island) have legislation or an Order in Council that defines and governs the provision of home
42 care services” (The Canadian Home Care Association).

43
44 There is a need for a national policy and programs aimed at achieving a level of consistency in home care
45 throughout all provinces and territories. The purpose of the *Canada Health Act* “is to establish criteria
46 and conditions in respect of insured health services and extended health care services provided under
47 provincial law that must be met before a full cash contribution may be made” (Government of Canada).
48 Through its legislative role, the federal government can facilitate national approaches and standards that
49 must be satisfied by provincial/territorial healthcare insurance plans. Amending the *Canada Health Act* to
50 include home care as an insured health service would ensure that Canadian citizens would have
51 “reasonable access to health services without financial or other barriers” (*Canada Health Act*).

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Action Plan

- 1 1. Write to the prime minister, minister of health and your member of parliament urging
2 them to include home care in the *Canada Health Act*.
3
- 4 2. Initiate a petition among CWL members requesting that governments include home
5 care in the *Canada Health Act*.
6
- 7 3. As a CWL council, study the Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and
8 Compassionate Care report “Not to be Forgotten, Care of Vulnerable Canadian” as
9 well as publications from Catholic Organization for Life and Family that deal with
10 vulnerable people (e.g. “Families, Christ Calls us to sow joy and hope!”).
11
- 12 4. As a CWL council support local hospices financially as well as volunteering.
13
- 14 5. As a CWL council co-ordinate assistance to disabled and elderly (housework,
15 cooking, appointments, shopping, etc.)
16
- 17 6. Invite speakers to a meeting that will educate members on home care services that are
18 available in the community.
19
- 20 7. Monitor the federal government’s response to the request contained in the resolution