

## Improved Wait Times Are Only The Beginning

**Ottawa: April 4, 2006** – While supportive of the new government's commitment to address the issue of patient wait times, the Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA) cautions that wait times represent only one of a broad spectrum of health issues affecting our country.

In responding to today's Speech From The Throne, CPA is calling on governments to show leadership by addressing not only wait time concerns but continuing health human resource issues, the need to establish clear and achievable benchmarks in research and technology and improved federal-provincial relations.

"Much like a jigsaw puzzle, Canadian health issues are all interrelated, and when one piece is missing, we have an incomplete picture. Wait times are intrinsically linked to health human resources, for example," explains Karen Hurtubise, CPA President. The problem of wait times can only be addressed by having adequate numbers of properly trained health professionals available to meet the growing needs of Canada's population. That means aligning systemic needs, political realities and fiscal priorities to effectively address all of the issues affecting our health system and not focusing on a single issue."

"Improved wait times also do not equate to improved access," explains Pamela Fralick, Canadian Physiotherapy Association CEO. "Canadians will continue to lack accessibility to a comprehensive health system, including needed physiotherapy services, even if wait times improvements are made," she says. "That's why we're calling for a more comprehensive approach."

CPA encourages governments to work together to ensure access to a broad range of publicly insured health services. There are still many Canadians who do not have access to comprehensive health care. For example, outside of admission to a hospital, physiotherapy services are not accessible nationally to all Canadians. Public funding for community-based rehabilitation services – clinic-based or home care - varies greatly from province to province and is often rationed, affecting timely access to treatment.

CPA supports the five principles of the Canada Health Act - universality, accessibility, comprehensiveness, portability and public administration - and believes that this is a critical time for leadership in achieving a truly national health system.

The Canadian Physiotherapy Association is the voluntary organization representing more than 9,500 members and students across the country. CPA's mission is to provide leadership and direction to the physiotherapy profession, foster excellence in practice, education and research and promote high standards of health in Canada.

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