



Solve Canada's Doctor Shortage By Copying European Health Care (June 20, 2008)

INTRO

Hi, this is Mark Milke. If you've tried to find a family doctor recently, you – and millions of other Canadians know how difficult that is. To combat that shortage, Canada needs to look to Europe for reform of our health care system. Hear more, on today's Frontier Centre commentary

BODY

If you've tried to find a doctor you know it's almost impossible. So it's no surprise that Canada lags most other developed countries. According to the OECD, Canada ranks 23rd out of 30 countries for doctors per 1,000 people.

For example, Germany, France and Portugal all have over 50 percent more doctors relative to their population than does Canada. Greece has over 120 percent more doctors.

And Canada is not catching up.

Since 1990, the United Kingdom increased their doctor supply by 50 percent relative to the population; in Canada, our supply has only increased by 5 percent.

Can anything be done? Sure, Sweden sold Stockholm's largest hospital to the private sector years ago. Sweden now contracts to that hospital for care. That means instead of spending money on buildings and upkeep, money is freed up for health care services – and to pay doctors.

If Canadian governments want Europe's success in growing the number of doctors, they need to imitate European health care delivery.

OUTRO

I'm Mark Milke. Join the prairie's only independent think tank next week for more thinking on the Frontier. For more about social policy, visit our website, at fcpp.org

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