



Leah Casselman

## President's Message

# Don't sit on your hands; Reach for the phone

When former Saskatchewan Premier Roy Romanow unveiled his report on Medicare, he told Canadians the future of his report was in their hands.

He was as right about that as he was about his prescription for a national publicly funded health care system, with no room for privatization.

Since his report was made public, we have watched provincial health ministers and premiers shuffling away from their responsibilities as fast as they can, while the federal government mutters about it being a lot of money.

This isn't good enough for Canadians, and as Canadians it is our responsibility to make sure our elected members know what we think.

Medicare is probably the most important public service we have. It has been suffering from a decade of budget-cutting, finger-pointing and interprovincial bickering.

If our governments are reluctant to take Romanow's advice on how to fix Medicare, then we must take his advice on what we must do.

This is one report that should not be filed away. And if the government plans to do that, then we must plan to change the government and put in one that is committed to a fully accessible, publicly funded, portable, comprehensive and accountable system.

The federal and provincial governments have to stop their in-fighting over this. We pay the taxes to both levels of government. Poll after poll has shown that Canadians like Medicare, want it improved, and are committed to it.

This is not just a message for members of OPSEU. It is not just a message for members of unions.

Romanow heard our desire for a renewed and stronger Medicare. Some 38,000 Canadians participated in his review of the system, through presentations at his hearings, through the internet and in letters and messages.

Romanow heard us. His blueprint for Medicare reflects what we want.

Now we have to listen to him. We have to write, phone, fax, email, visit and otherwise get in touch with our MPs. Tell them to take the Romanow Report off their shelves and start implementing it.

Tell your MPPs that you want the provincial government to move ahead with implementing Romanow's recommendations.

If we don't get this message through to our legislators, we have only ourselves to blame when privatization eats away at a service we all depend on.

Read the articles on pages 4 and 5 of this edition for more information on the Romanow Report and its importance. Read, and then act. ▲

Leah Casselman, President