



**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Competition would strengthen health care delivery

(Calgary, AB) – In a submission made last week to the Minister’s Advisory Committee on Health, the Calgary Chamber of Commerce urged adopting the principle of ‘enabling flexible delivery and access choice’ to recognize the potential contribution of the private sector to reduce costs, encourage innovation and improve access in a publicly funded health system. The Committee is currently seeking feedback on a new *Alberta Health Act*.

“Competition and a greater number of private providers would strengthen the publicly funded system and help reduce waiting times,” said Ben Brunnen, Director of Policy & Research and Chief Economist with the Calgary Chamber of Commerce. “We are not advocating a private, parallel system with private insurance, rather a mixed model of delivery of publicly funded health services.”

In 2010, Chamber members identified ‘health care’ as a top policy priority impacting their business. The Chamber recognizes that quality health care can serve as a distinct advantage to attract businesses and talented workers.

“Within the framework of the *Canada Health Act*, we recommend creating greater access choice by allowing patients to purchase health care services including upgrades beyond the basic levels funded by government, similar to other provinces,” said Brunnen.

Alberta has a great public health system; however, like all systems it is facing pressures. Health care costs represent over 40 per cent of the provincial budget and threaten to crowd out other important programs.

“Our intent is to encourage informed debate about health care reform and to discuss alternatives,” stated Brunnen. “The system needs to enable timely access to quality care, efficient allocation of health dollars, encourage innovation and be fiscal sustainable over the long-term.”

About the Chamber:

The Calgary Chamber of Commerce is a member-driven, sustainable organization whose mission is to connect, serve and champion the Calgary business community in its quest to excel.



The Public & Government Affairs Department measurably contributes to the Chamber's profile and effectiveness. We are the leading edge business advocate and forum for debate, and a credible source for policy analysis and issue commentary. We advocate new and innovative solutions to improve the business climate on behalf of our members.

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