



**Message from Honourable Iris Evans
Minister of Health and Wellness**

GETTING ON WITH BETTER HEALTH CARE

Alberta's health system has gone through a lot of changes in the last ten years. Most of those changes have been designed to improve Albertans' access to quality health care. Regional health authorities, health care providers, and a whole host of community partners have worked together to improve access, streamline services, open up new approaches to care, and respond to the needs of Alberta's fast-growing population.

While many good things have been accomplished, it's fair to say there still are some important challenges to address. In some cases, people wait too long for the services they need. Costs of health care, especially the cost of drugs, home care, and new treatments, are increasing at an alarming rate. And while many Albertans take good care of their health, we're still not doing enough to stay healthy and prevent illnesses like heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.

So there's a lot more work to be done. And we need to move forward.

That message was delivered by Premier Klein in January 2005. In describing a "third way" for Alberta's health system, he urged everyone involved in health care – from the provincial government to regional health authorities, health care providers, communities and individual Albertans – to get on with what needs to be done.

In May, health care experts from around the world gathered in Alberta for Unleashing Innovation in Health Systems – Alberta's Symposium on Health. They told us there is no single solution to health care. Instead, it's important to move ahead with literally hundreds of ideas and improvements – improvements that will work, meet patients' needs, and make a positive difference in the health of Albertans.

We're taking all that advice, and now we're getting on with better health care.

TAKING ACTION

This package of 12 initiatives is one more step in the ongoing evolution of Alberta's health care system. It includes a combination of things that are already underway but need to be accelerated – some things we're ready to move on now, and some are longer term proposals that we are considering.

We're interested in what Albertans think of the initiatives in this package. But make no mistake, we're moving ahead. We need to take action on a number of these initiatives because they're the right thing to do and they'll improve Albertans' access to quality health care. In other areas – like how we should pay for drugs or extra health services – we're looking for your feedback on some specific proposals.

We encourage Albertans to learn more about this package of initiatives, provide your feedback, and keep checking our website for updates over the coming months.

Honourable Iris Evans
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