Health coalitions issue joint statement o COVID-19

A coalition of Canadian health advocates has issued a statement declaring that the COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the extent to which our individual health is dependent on the health of everyone in our community.

?Public healthcare is our best defense against this crisis and others like it. However, our ability to endure crises and care for each other has been eroded through decades of austerity budgets, privatization and inadequate planning. Even during ?normal times,' the health care system is at capacity.

?While health care workers and communities are struggling to support each other, corporate interests are trying to profit. This must be resisted. The solution is not privatization. Instead, we should be strengthening universal health care and our collective ability to care for one another.

?As governments ramp up efforts to address the current crisis, Health Coalitions across Canada are calling for them to resist privatization and to uphold the foundational principles of equity and compassion that underlie our public health care system.

?We call upon all levels of government to work together to reclaim and increase the capacity of our public health care system to:

??ddress existing health inequities by removing barriers to access and scaling up services for marginalized communities

??estore capacity in our public hospitals by reopening facilities and beds that have been closed due to funding cuts and downsizing, and expand capacity under public and non-profit hospital governance

??ollow the lead of Spain and bring for-profit health care facilities under public control to enable a rapid and streamlined response in the public interest

??mprove supports for health care workers, including by adopting the strongest protective standards, enhancing recruitment and retention, and giving workers the resources and equipment they need

??nsure that all services are available free of charge and delivered publicly, including testing, vaccination, hospital stays and telehealth.

?Now more than ever, we need a universal, public health care system that puts patients before profits, that prioritizes the health of everyone living in Canada and that honours and respects the principles of the Canada Health Act.

?We cannot allow this crisis to be used to dismantle universal, public health care in Canada. Instead, we must renew our commitment to a system based not on profit, but instead on the shared belief that health care is a human right?.