SHAPING MANITOBA’S FUTURE

HEALTHCARE

In the summer of 2011, Graham Starmer, President of the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, became aware of the Citizens’ Reference Panel on Ontario Health Services initiative that was hosted by PwC LLP with participation from Ontarians from across every region of the province. The initiative demonstrated the power and value of engaging citizens in a dialogue on important public services such as healthcare.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce understands and agrees that Manitobans want and deserve the very best public services possible. This includes having access to the best healthcare services in Canada, provided they are affordable, effective and sustainable over the long-term. As an important contributor to the well-being of our province, the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce wants to be an active participant in ensuring this outcome is achieved.

With a belief that this type of initiative would be of value to the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, its’ members, and the province of Manitoba as a whole, Mr. Starmer announced the formation of the President’s Advisory Committee on Healthcare in Manitoba on October 26, 2011.

Since December, 2011, the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce President’s Advisory Committee on Healthcare in Manitoba has been focused on the complex, multi-faceted topic of healthcare in our province. Using the proven methodologies of community engagement events, surveys, jurisdictional reviews/research as well as direct consultations with key healthcare system stakeholders, the committee shared information and sought feedback on Manitoba’s healthcare services from numerous groups and constituents throughout the province, including members of the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, on healthcare from a variety of perspectives.

The President’s Healthcare Advisory Committee takes the view that the areas identified and recommendations in this Report are all actionable and merit attention in the very near future.
Three Key Areas of Focus

This report provides a perspective on three key areas of focus as identified by the Committee members and outlined below:

1. **Economic Sustainability**
   Manitobans must understand the economics of our province’s health services so that they possess a baseline understanding of where they can positively impact the system itself.

2. **Healthy Living**
   In the context of this report, Healthy Living means making positive choices and taking action and ownership to enhance and enrich one’s personal physical, mental and spiritual health. It also requires a commitment to continued support and investment in leading practices and programs that are consistent with supporting, improving, maintaining and/or enhancing health.

3. **Patients as Partners**
   Manitobans need to take greater responsibility for the management of their own individual health. This is where the Manitoba healthcare system can help. Instead of viewing themselves solely as a client or customer, Manitoba patients must become partners in their healthcare relationships. Increased two-way communication and education can lead to true ownership, improved outcomes and more efficient use of the money we spend on healthcare.

This report addresses these three priorities and is intended to act as a catalyst to start a larger, meaningful dialogue among Manitobans, the provincial government, the healthcare provider community, the business community and one another. It is also intended to provide the framework for an action plan the Committee plans to implement in 2013 and beyond.

Why Healthcare is a Top Priority for The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce and one of its’ Key Strategic Directions for 2012-2015

Identified as one of the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce’s key initiatives over the long term, healthcare has become a top organizational priority. A strong, sustainable healthcare system in
Manitoba will benefit its citizens and the businesses that employ them, ultimately helping to grow our provincial economy. A healthier population translates into a more productive workforce. In time, an increased focus from the business community on actively supporting Manitoba’s healthcare system can reduce costs to government. The money saved can, in turn, be allocated to other vital areas. Ultimately, this will positively affect the Manitoba economy.

For these reasons, the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce is taking an active, long-term approach to healthcare.

**Economic Sustainability**

As an issue, economic sustainability is often referred to as the “elephant in the room.” The reality is that roughly 40 per cent of all Canadian provincial government budgets are allocated to healthcare.

Compounding this reality is that, as Manitoba’s population ages, the need for healthcare services increases while the percentage of people contributing to the funding of health services through taxes decreases. For this reason, it is vital that Manitobans possess a clear understanding of this challenge, since everyone can contribute both today and into the future to ensure a quality and sustainable health care service delivery system in our province.

**Issues and Opportunities for Change**

**Demographics** – the number of Canadians and Manitobans requiring health services will increase as our population continues to age as well as increase. This is not just a Manitoba phenomenon; it is one that the rest of Canada is also going to experience. This alone presents a major challenge to our society as a whole and Manitobans need to do whatever we can to minimize the financial burden this will put on our health system and overall government finances.

**The rigidity of the current delivery system and funding model** – Our health system manages costs through rationing and waiting lists. While there may be advantages to such a system, this also limits innovation and experimentation with new models that could provide value to the general public and government as a whole in the long run.

**Upcoming changes to the federal funding model in 2017** – The Government of Canada’s Finance Minister, Jim Flaherty, will start paring back annual increases in health transfer payments to the provinces, starting in 2017. These federal funds have grown at more than six per cent annually in recent years. Starting in 2017, annual increases will be tied to economic growth. Manitoba stands to lose up to $40 million a year when scheduled changes to the federal health-funding formula are implemented in 2017.
Healthcare is a politically-charged issue – It is difficult for any government to make significant decisions on healthcare without facing a tremendous amount of scrutiny and pressure from the general public. Given the emotional nature of health services and the historic political ramifications of making any significant or structural changes to the system, it is very difficult to separate politics and votes from healthcare services. While we understand the realities of this situation, there is a role for business to play here.

RECOMMENDATIONS | ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

The Committee understands that change cannot occur overnight. However, it shares the view that areas of Manitoba’s healthcare system should be examined in the interests of achieving greater efficiency and service levels through new funding and delivery models. Through further discussion with government and healthcare leaders, this Committee is prepared to help explore the following potential options:

1. **Assess and Modify the Healthcare Delivery System Funding Model.**
   Introduce service-based billing instead of global funding; with the objective of introducing innovation and efficiencies to produce lower costs. Competition for provision of services should be considered in order to provide services at the best possible price. The Committee agrees that the current system can be enhanced to develop efficiencies to provide benchmark healthcare for fewer dollars.

2. **De-Politicize the Process by Implementing a Provincial Healthcare Advisory Council of Business and Community Leaders.**
   While the Committee commends the work of Manitoba’s regional community councils, it recommends the Manitoba Department of Health implement an advisory council. This would engage leaders from the private sector for their views on innovation, competition and other vital issues. The Committee is also prepared to participate in such a council.

3. **Ask the Manitoba Public What It Expects from the Healthcare System in the Context of Current Economic Trends and Realities.**
   As evidenced in the Ontario project and the community forums that this Committee hosted in Steinbach and Winnipeg, there is value in educating the community on the realities of the economic situation. The Committee suggests that the Manitoba Department of Health provide annual briefings on economic sustainability and the progress which can be made in this area.

4. **Increase Focus on the Top 10 Per Cent of Users of the Manitoba Healthcare System.**
   Since this specific healthcare user group represents the majority of total healthcare system costs, a concerted and continued effort with collaboration across multiple departments is recommended to produce meaningful results.
5. **Increase Education and Awareness of the Costs of Hospital Care versus Primary Healthcare.**
   Since the largest expense in Manitoba’s healthcare system is hospital or acute care, the general public needs to be aware of how Manitobans can lower these expenses. The current initiative to provide a family doctor for all Manitobans by 2015 is one such concept supported by the Committee and one that should prove beneficial for all.

6. **Be Bold in Healthcare System Messaging.**
   The Committee agrees that the current system financials are not sustainable. Therefore, the Manitoba public needs to be engaged and informed so they can become a part of the solution.

7. **Be Forward-Looking.**
   The Committee urges Manitobans to focus on options and solutions through increased awareness and dialogue. Healthcare affects all Manitobans. Therefore, all Manitobans need to be involved in the solution. We can leverage the data from the past but must focus on the future.

**Healthy Living**

Healthy Living is all about making positive choices to enhance and enrich one’s personal physical, mental and spiritual health.

For the purposes of this Report, Healthy Living is also considered a long-term solution to help drive down costs through improved health for all Manitobans. It also can be seen as an enabler in:

- Bending the demand curve of healthcare services
- Combating chronic diseases which seriously affect Manitoba’s healthcare system from an economic perspective
- Allowing governments to be bold and innovative by setting healthy living goals for the province.
- Delivering sustainable and increasing results across multiple government terms and generations of Manitobans
- Rallying Manitobans and Manitoba’s business community to lead the nation as the **Healthiest Province in Canada**.

**ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTHY LIVING**

- **Coordination of Programming and Activities through Multiple Levels of Government.**
The Committee is impressed with the volume of programs available. However, while the intentions are undoubtedly good, the Committee recommends careful consideration be given to refining and re-focusing key areas and programs to allow for improved coordination.

- **Current Condition of Some Recreational Facilities, especially in Rural Manitoba.** While many new facilities have been and continue to be built in many communities, others are in need of major improvement. As a result, the Committee takes the view that this issue needs to be addressed as soon as possible.

- **Access to Programs.** The Committee agrees that the issue of access needs to continually be addressed for several key segments of the population.

- **Active Start Programs.** The Committee agrees that the effort to involve children aged 6 years old and under in daily, unstructured play—without barriers to participation—is indeed starting to take hold and must continue to be supported throughout the province.

- **Research Suggests the Next Generation of Manitoba Children May Not Grow to be as healthy as their Parents.** As business and community leaders, the Committee agrees that such a situation cannot be allowed to happen.

**RECOMMENDATIONS | HEALTHY LIVING**

1. **Establish a goal for Manitoba to become “The Healthiest Province in Canada.”**
   A bold, easy-to-understand target with a clear message and aggressive

2. **Increase Accessibility.**
   Make facilities and programs more readily available to high risk groups including youth and lower income families. At present, several effective programs such as KidSport do exist but we, as a province, need to show more leadership here and continue to invest accordingly.

3. **Increase the Focus on Nutrition Programs at home, at school and at work**

4. **Engage Manitoba’s Business Community in Healthy Living Programs in the workplace.**
   The committee has started a dialogue with the Department of Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs to actively work together on new and existing programs for 2013.

**Patients as Partners**

The Committee believes that Manitobans, as a population, need to become more responsible in managing their own health. Rather than considering themselves solely as clients or customers, patients must become true partners in their healthcare relationships.
Increased two-way communication and education will lead to true ownership and improved outcomes. From the Committee’s discussions with doctors and community-members, it is clear that Manitoba’s doctors definitely do put their patients’ needs first. A more interactive and accountable relationship needs to be developed and put into action.

Research indicates that healthcare systems the world over are under pressure. None can cope if each continues to focus on diseases rather than patients. Patients need to adhere to their treatments, make behavioural changes and be more responsible and accountable to maintain their own health.

Satisfied, educated patients come with a host of important benefits. They also can cost less to serve and consume resources more efficiently.

People served by this kind of healthcare system are more likely to develop good habits that are easy to learn and maintain over time. They are also more receptive to healthcare providers which, in turn, can lead to an increased likelihood of making follow-up appointments, taking prescribed drugs and scheduling regular and doctor-recommended screenings. Satisfied healthcare recipients are also more likely to work with their healthcare providers to prevent illness rather than seek treatment after illness occurs. Such a preventive approach could indeed reduce the costs associated with Manitoba healthcare.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PATIENTS AS PARTNERS

- Many programs exist across the provincial departments of Health and Healthy Living, but Manitoba appears to be lacking a specific Patients as Partners program.
- Manitobans want to be engaged.
- Manitoba’s business community is prepared to support the concept of a Patients as Partners program and share best practices that can be leveraged from the private sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS | PATIENTS AS PARTNERS

1. **Develop Manitoba’s own Patients as Partners program.**
   The Committee recommends that this program include:
   a. Annual citizen engagement events hosted by the Manitoba Department of Health.
   b. A Communication and Education Curriculum/Strategy on the key drivers of our healthcare system. This includes cost analysis of different healthcare options, healthy living strategies, updates on Departmental priorities and related information—specifically designed to reduce costs and improve outcomes.
   c. Introduction of a personal Patients as Partners Agreement or Contract for every patient on a voluntary basis along with a plan for expansion as the initiative takes hold—including provision of information on healthy living, personal targets, preventative measures and medication information.
Conclusion and Next Steps

Healthcare is a critical, complex, political and emotional service provided by provincial governments across Canada. During the past year, the President’s Advisory Committee on Healthcare members have gained a sincere appreciation and deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities involved in ensuring all Manitobans have access to a quality healthcare system for generations to come.

While the Committee itself is not qualified to recommend significant or structural changes to the healthcare system in Manitoba, it is confident that it has identified the three key areas in which Manitoba Chambers members, and Manitobans as a whole, need to become more engaged.

The President’s Healthcare Advisory Committee takes the view that the areas identified and recommendations in this report are all actionable and merit attention in the coming year. As it moves forward in the months ahead, it is neither fair nor realistic to assume that the need for quality healthcare services in our province will decrease. It is however, realistic to consider, develop and apply a well-supported and designed action plan with a long-term focus to reduce healthcare costs as a percentage of our provincial budget with the same or improved service.

In 2012, the Committee’s objective was to start the dialogue on this important topic. With the support of its members and the numerous individuals and Manitobans that participated throughout 2012, that has been accomplished. In 2013, it plans to set in motion a concrete plan to show progress in all three areas identified in the report. It will accomplish this by actively engaging Manitoba’s business community in a collaborative and supportive fashion with Manitobans and the Manitoba government.
Volunteer Members of the Committee

- Committee Chair: Dale Lacombe, Managing Director, Public Sector Consulting, PwC Management Services LLP
- Brian Scharfstein, President, Canadian Footwear
- Chuck Davidson, Vice-President Policy, Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce
- Greg Lamothe, Partner, Consulting team, MNP LLP
- Harold Just, Manager, Government and Economic Affairs, Eli Lilly Canada Inc.
- Jeff Hnatiuk, President and CEO, Sport Manitoba
- Nicole Chammartin, Executive Director, Canadian Mental Health Association – Winnipeg Region
- Phil Cyrenne, Chair and Professor, Department of Economics, University of Winnipeg
- Tracey Maconachie, Executive Director, Life Sciences Association of Manitoba
- Dr. Warren Froese, Orthopaedic Surgeon

Manitoba Chambers of Commerce Management Team

- Graham Starmer, President, Manitoba Chambers of Commerce
- Sue Barkman, Director, Policy and Communications, Manitoba Chambers of Commerce
- Terry Hayes, Director, Marketing and Membership, Manitoba Chambers of Commerce