Abstract

This paper examines the current health care reform issues in Canada. The provincial health insurance plans of the 1960s and 1970s had the untoward effects of limiting the federal government’s clout for cost control and promoting a system centered on inpatient and medical care. Recently, several provincial commissions reported that the current governance structures and management processes are outmoded in light of new knowledge, new fiscal realities and the evolution of power among stakeholders. They recommend decentralized governance and restructuring for better management and more citizen participation. Although Canada’s health care system remains committed to safeguarding its guiding principles, the balance of power may be shifting from providers to citizens and technocrats. Also, all provinces are likely to increase their pressure on physicians by means of salary caps, by exploring payment methods such as capitation, limiting access to costly technology, and by demanding practice changes based on evidence of cost-effectiveness.

Keywords

health care reform; consumer participation; Canada.