

**THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS:
FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL
DECISION-MAKING FOR
HEALTH POLICY**

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forward and the state may never be able to get within range of it.²³

There are three main factors that, in combination, provide an explanation for both the increasing importance of rationing and the consequent need for greater transparency in decision-making involving issues of distributional equity in health systems. 1) There is heavy

programmes and provincial policy agenda. The

the provinces.⁷ Hence, it is clear that health care

choices). Therefore, while some people consider implicit rationing to be "...a silent conspiracy between a dense obscuring (sic) bureaucracy

services in Canada. However, the possibility merits some attention because there exists potential for increased indirect commodification, and many

1. The author of the text is Candace Redden. The text is a collection of poems. The poems are written in a simple, conversational style. The poems are often about everyday life and the things we see around us. The poems are often about the things we see through the looking glass.

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government was able to assume a greater degree of

“notional” in that “the provinces are assumed to

be equal in the decentralized federal system” 48

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2010 under the EPF arrangements.⁵² The CHST does not make any distinctions among the three

attention of governments, while income maintenance/ welfare assistance programmes will

still have poorer health. The data suggest "some underlying general causal process, correlated with hierarchy, which expresses itself through different diseases. But the particular diseases that carry people off may then simply be alternative pathways or mechanisms rather than "causes" of illness and death; the essential factor is something else."⁶⁰ And it is this "something else" on which current public policy agenda are focused (at least in terms of rhetoric; political commitments are very weak in this area).

Public policy has been reoriented to target certain disadvantaged populations in order that the

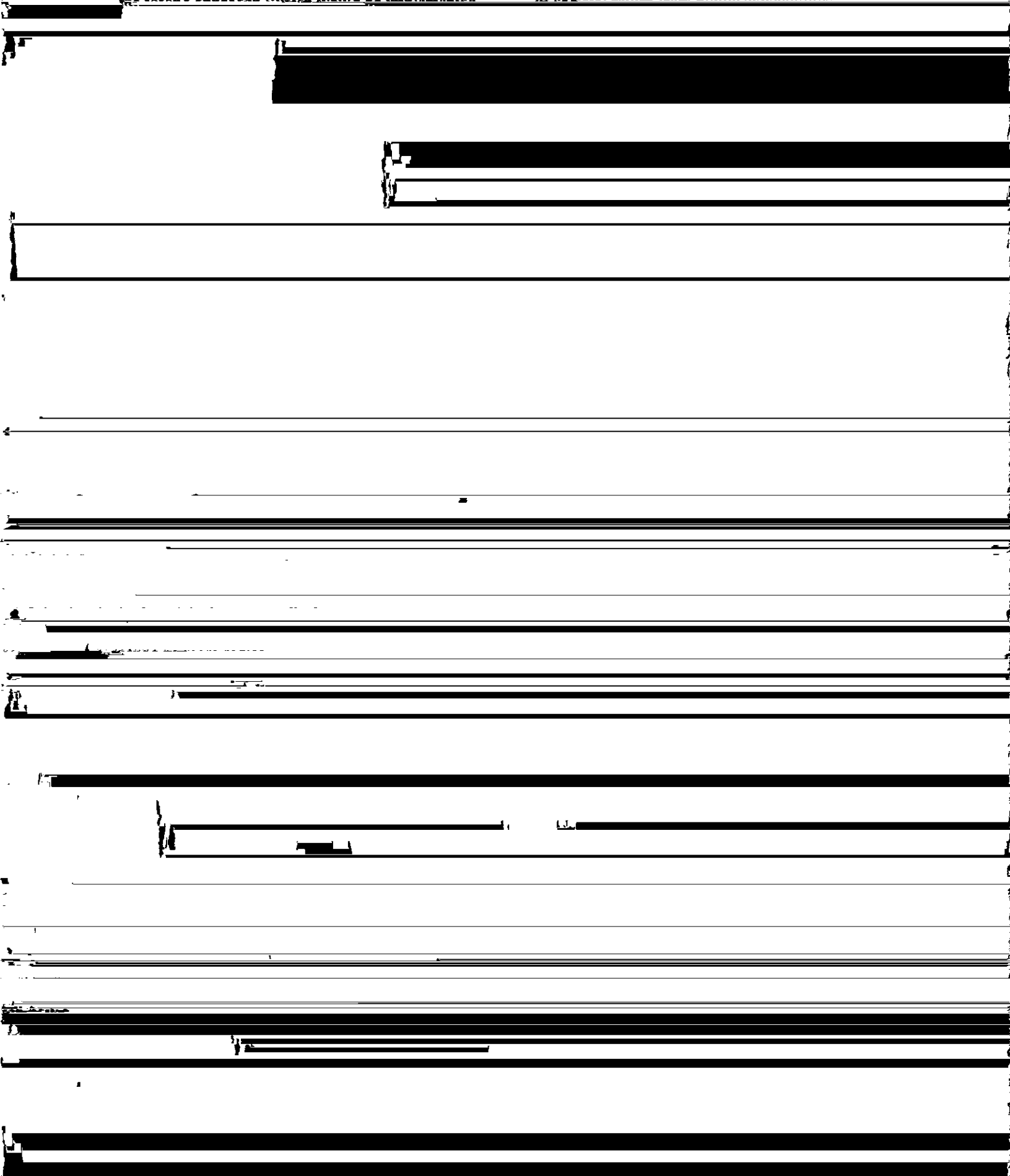
CMA annual meeting, Dr. Harold Booy explained that "the trouble with the emphasis on the determinants of health . . . is that governments put too much emphasis on overall health for all of society while they ignore what individuals are actually suffering."⁶² To be sure, it is generally accepted by medical professionals that the broad determinants of health do play an important role in the health status of populations as well as individuals. The main concern (as expressed at the annual CMA meeting), was "that the emphasis on determinants of health is used by governments to justify taking money away from health care."⁶³

In general terms, the pressure on the state to pursue retrenchment policies has translated into a seriously negative environment for health care

reducing its spending commitments in this policy area, although it is trying to maintain its symbolic role by insisting that the conditions of payment,⁶⁹ as specified in the Canada Health Act, be upheld. The

accords rather than federal intervention." Clearly,
~~the second approach (which would be implemented~~

of budgeting is considered to be the "maximization
~~of societal return from public expenditures~~"⁷⁵



that women in the rest of Canada cannot depend on any one elected government to

Further, attention to detail at the administrative level and a strong federal presence are not mutually

7. This option is particularly appealing to those provinces that were hardest hit by the CHST

21. Nova Scotia Medical Services insurance. Physicians' Bulletin, February 7, 1997 and February

Y... .. Environmental Relations

70 Alan Meleis "Time to fold or un the enter the

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