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Media Release

Canada's Dental Hygienists call for Federal Leadership in Health Care

December 2, 2014 (Ottawa, ON) – The Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA), a member of the Health Action Lobby (HEAL), supports the HEAL consensus statement launched today calling for the federal government to embrace the *Canadian Way* of addressing national health issues through compassion, consensus, and collaboration.

The consensus statement, entitled *Accelerating Innovation and Improving Health System Performance,* is intended to prompt all federal parties to articulate their own positions on health care for Canadians in advance of the election in 2015. A recent Nanos survey confirmed that Canadians consider health care as a top priority for all political parties in the next federal election, scoring it at 7.6 on a 10-point scale.

"CDHA is proud to have been involved in the development and endorsement of this consensus statement. The federal government is encouraged to take a leadership role in health care, including oral health priorities," said Ondina Love, CEO of CDHA. "We support the HEAL approach — one that is deeply rooted in compassion, consensus, and collaboration."

The statement identifies several ways in which the federal government can play a leadership role in improving the health and health care of Canadians: accelerating the pace of innovation, improving overall accountability and transparency in system performance, and raising the level of collaboration with the provinces and territories, and providers. The statement focuses on six issues:

1. Improved collaboration between the federal government and the provinces and territories.
2. A vision statement for the federal government in health and health care.
3. A performance framework to guide improvements and innovation in health systems and health care delivery.
4. Options for a financially stable health system.
5. The need for strategic, federal investments related to Canada's aging population, access to prescription drugs, and the spread of on-the-ground health innovations.
6. The development of a common set of national health system performance indicators.

The consensus statement also identifies a combination of time-limited strategic funds to spur system improvements including a *National Health Innovation Fund* and a *Community-Based Health Infrastructure Fund*. Love reported that "health care, including oral health, continues to be a top priority for Canadians. All federal political parties should define their action plan to address health prevention, promotion and care priorities." According to a recent Nanos survey, 90 percent of respondents said the leadership role the federal government plays in health is important or somewhat important.

CDHA looks forward to working with HEAL and all levels of government to improve the health of all Canadians.

The consensus statement is available at www.healthactionlobby.ca.

The complete Nanos survey results can be accessed at www.healthactionlobby.ca or at www.nanosresearch.com.

Serving the profession since 1963, CDHA is the collective national voice of more than 26,800 registered dental hygienists working in Canada, directly representing 17,000 individual members including dental hygienists and students. Dental hygiene is the sixth largest registered health profession in Canada with professionals working in a variety of settings, including independent practice, with people of all ages, addressing issues related to oral health. For more information on oral health, visit: www.dentalhygienecanda.ca.

HEAL is a coalition of 39 national health and consumer associations and organizations dedicated to protecting and strengthening Canada's health system. Created in 1991, and representing more than 650,000 providers and consumer of health care, HEAL's major focus is on the federal role in health and health care.

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