

CANADIAN HEALTH CARE

The publicly financed health care system in Canada has been widely described, however to put the changes occurring in the Atlantic Provinces in context it is helpful to briefly review the system's structure (1-3). Although the Canadian health care system is widely discussed, there is actually no national health system, rather each province has its own system which is structured to meet the unique characteristics of the province. The federal government provides partial funding as long as each province meets the basic requirements of ensuring that its health system is universal, comprehensive, portable, accessible, and publicly administered. The portion of total health expenditures funded by the federal government has continued to decline and the original transfers for health were scheduled to be phased out around the turn of the century. In order to perpetuate the federal government's ability to enforce health care requirements, plans are now in place to combine transfer payments for health, social programs, and education into one payment.