

promote acceptance of these targets by universities, ministries of education, professional, hospital and health associations and other interested parties.

In addition, many witnesses criticized the physicians' role as the "gatekeepers" to health services. They consider that making use of other health professionals would expand the concept of health and make it possible to offer better-quality, more appropriate care at lower costs. According to the Canadian Chiropractic Association, insufficient recourse to non-medical professionals constitutes one of the major shortcomings of the Canadian health care system. The Association said that the system should encourage the widest possible recourse to qualified health professionals. It asserted that the difficulty lies in establishing a balance between the individual's right to choose the form of health care he or she prefers and the State's obligation to pay for care.

(. . .), the data suggests that alternatives are used exclusively unless complications that require a referral (a patient uses either a mid-wife or a medical physician) so funding alternatives does not necessarily increase the costs and may substantially decrease them (virtually all the alternatives are cheaper both in direct costs—fees to the practitioner—and indirect costs—the facilities needed to deliver the care).¹⁴⁷

Other witnesses, on the other hand, argued that direct access to services provided by alternative professionals carries the risk of generating a strong increase in demand and consequently a jump in costs.

¹⁴⁷ Brief, p. 25.