



THE BEACON



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*Where Tomorrow's Public
Policy Begins Today*

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Part One: The Shape of Health Care to Come: AIMS launches the Canadian Health Care Consensus Group.

Over the past decade there have been countless reviews and reports on what should be done to reform Canada's health care system. Prescriptions have ranged from major changes in how health care is organized and delivered to variations on the status quo. Still Canadians wait too long for many essential services. Rising health care costs threaten the sustainability of the system. And there are serious concerns about looming shortages of health care professionals.

Unfortunately, much of the debate and discussion on reform has been fractious and highly charged, with the focus on strong opposing views. The fear underlying much of the debate is that any substantial changes will undermine medicare or the principles of the Canada Health Act.

Enter the Canadian Health Care Consensus Group organized by the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies. AIMS brought together a prestigious group of experts to move the issue along. The members of the Canadian Health Care Consensus Group, while committed to the principle that Canadians must have affordable, high quality and universally accessible publicly financed health care, believe that there is an emerging consensus about the direction that reform must take.

By communicating the building consensus to all Canadians and encouraging people to become involved in the process, health care reform can be driven by the very people the system was designed to serve, rather than by review boards, conflicting agendas, and fear.

Click here to read more.

Click here to visit the Canadian Health Care Consensus Group website at www.consensusgroup.ca)



Part Two: When Tea and Sympathy are not enough: AIMS groundbreaking conference on catastrophic drug coverage in Atlantic Canada.

It is an issue any one of us could face. It is the catastrophic gap in prescription drug coverage, and the reality of it leaves many in Atlantic Canada without vital medication.

It is a problem that much of the rest of the country has wrestled with far more successfully than we have and we need to catch up. It's a pressing public policy issue that has gone mostly unnoticed in this region until now.

AIMS is bringing together national and regional leaders to look at how we can address the problem. Our conference, ***When Tea and Sympathy are not enough: The catastrophic gap in prescription drug coverage in Atlantic Canada***, is among the first to focus attention on this pressing, topical, and growing public policy issue.

There are only a few spaces available for this groundbreaking conference, which takes place on Tuesday, May 16th, at the Marriott Harbourfront in Halifax.

To learn more about this conference or to register, [click here](#).

Part Three: Could Do Better 2: AIMS finds Atlantic Canadian budgets come up short.

Fiscal health, budgetary accuracy, and budgetary impact are a hit and miss proposition in Atlantic Canada concludes the latest AIMS paper *Could Do Better 2: Grading Atlantic Canada's 2005/06 provincial finances* by Dr. David Murrell and Bruce Winchester.

Says Murrell, an economics professor at UNB, "promises of balanced budgets, fiscal growth and prudent spending generally go unrealized in Atlantic Canada. Large government, huge debts, unchecked spending and creative accounting are far more likely to be found here."

This is the second annual review of budget performance in Atlantic Canada by Murrell and co-author Bruce Winchester. *Could Do Better 2* again grades the public finances of the Atlantic Provinces relative to each other and to the Canadian average.

The region doesn't do well. Its overall grade is a mere C, which is slightly better than the C- it got last year.

To read the complete paper, [click here](#).

Part Four: Lessons for Toronto: AIMS Fellow on Public Education Reform turns teacher for T-O.

The AIMS Angus McBeath North American Tour hit Toronto with a bang, as reporters scrambled to talk to the AIMS Fellow on Public Education Reform. As he has done across North America, Angus McBeath, provided insight of what a successful school

looks like and how it can be achieved.

Now retired as superintendent of Edmonton Schools, McBeath oversaw the reformation of a school system making it one of the most successful in North America.

Much as he has done on the other stops along the way, McBeath provides an example of how to save our public schools. In this story from The National Post, McBeath shows how it can be done.

[Click here](#) to link to the article.

Part Five: Moving Beyond the Rotary Phone: AIMS in the Toronto Star

The methods of interpersonal communication have changed dramatically in the past decade or two. From that one black rotary telephone that sat in a central location in the home, to the world of wireless, digital communication that includes text, audio and video. In this column, published in The Toronto Star and other newspapers, AIMS president Brian Lee Crowley points out Canada needs to regulate for the times, not the bygone ages.

He writes, *"The riotous world of telecommunications has never offered more choice, more providers, or more means of communicating with people anywhere in the world at prices that are almost token given the speed and reach of the service."*

But government in Canada has not kept up with this revolution, and this is having increasingly harmful effects on our standard of living, as our investment in new technologies fails to keep pace with that of our international competitors."

[Click here](#) to read the complete column.

Part Six: Shipping In, Shipping Out: AIMS paper shows Port of Halifax could be successful by having it both ways.

Is it a gateway to the lucrative US market, or a hub port for transshipment? The latest paper in AIMS Atlantica series suggests the Port of Halifax could have it both ways and be successful.

In *Shipping Out: The Development of a Gateway Hub at the Port of Halifax*, author James Frost says "Halifax now has a unique opportunity to establish itself as both a rail-oriented gateway and a water-based transshipment hub."

A transshipment hub is a container port that provides terminal and marine services to handle the transfer of containers between feeder and mother vessels. Cargo is transferred from large "mother" ships at load centre ports onto small "feeder" ships destined for smaller, regional ports. The concept is akin to a hub-and-spoke airline operation, that saw the national airlines service one regional airport with regional airlines shuffling passengers back and forth between the regional and local airports.

Shipping Out examines hub port developments around the world and finds there are

many examples of successful hubs, but not in North America. It suggests Halifax could be the exception.

Halifax's position on various Great Circle Routes also means that it is the closest east coast North American port to both South America and South Africa - a fact that most people do not realize - and vessels calling at Halifax could link up with services to Santos, Brazil, and Cape Town, South Africa," writes Frost.

To read the complete paper, [click here](#).

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