Sustainability and Canadian Health Care

Jeremiah Hurley\textsuperscript{1,2,3}

\textsuperscript{1}Department of Economics, McMaster University
\textsuperscript{2}Centre for Health Economics and Policy Analysis, McMaster University
\textsuperscript{3}Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, McMaster University

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What do we want to sustain?

The current system?
What do we want to sustain?

The current system?

The realization of certain principles?
  • access to medically necessary services?
  • equal access to medically necessary services?
What do we mean by “Sustainable?”

Dimensions of Sustainability

- economic
- political
- social
- legal
Economic Sustainability

With Respect to the Overall Economy

- health care spending as proportion of GDP
Total HC Expend as Percent GDP, 2009

Source: OECD. 2011.
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Public-Sector Sustainability

- public health care spending as a proportion of program spending
- public health care spending as a proportion of tax revenue
Ontario Government Program Spending

Per Cent of Total Program Spending

Source: Ontario Ministry of Finance.

Challenges to Sustainability

Political

• Federal government with little interest in a national system with shared principles
• Can we have the required political discussions and debate?

Economic Performance

• Few things are more important than general economic growth for eliminating government deficits and creating room for sustainable growth in health care expenditures

Health Care Spending
Challenges to Sustainability

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Health Care Spending
Average Annual Growth Rate, Public Health Care Spending, Canada, 1998-2008

Average Annual Percentage Growth, Provincial-Territorial Health Spending, Canada, 1975-2007

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Health Care Spending

Physician Supply
Challenges to Health System Sustainability, cont’d

MD Supply

Challenges to Sustainability

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Health Care Spending

Physician Supply

Evolution of Health Care Sector
Challenges to Sustainability, cont’d

Evolution of Health Care Sector

• The nature of predominant diseases is changing
  • management of chronic disease increasingly proportion of medical needs

• The nature and role of health care is changing
  • lifestyle drugs, devices and interventions are increasingly the focus of medical innovation; these are non-medically necessary consumer services

Some Consequences

• Clean distinction between what is medically necessary (and hence, public) and what is not will increasingly blur.
  • The growing private, non-medically necessary sector will attract private capital that will seek to broaden markets for its services.
Challenges to Sustainability, cont’d

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