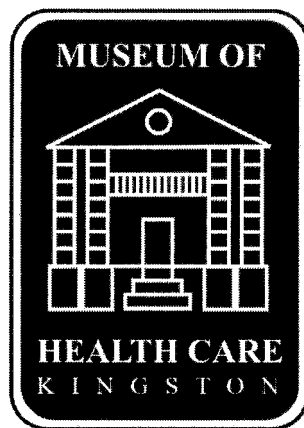


Legacy of Health Care in Canada

**National Advisory Board of
The Museum of Health Care at Kingston**



November 2005

This statement has been endorsed by the following organizations:

Association of Canadian Academic Healthcare Organizations

Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada

Canadian Coalition of Healthcare Museums and Archives

Canadian Medical Association

Canadian Nurses Association

Canadian Society for the History of Medicine

Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada

The College of Family Physicians of Canada

Legacy of Health Care in Canada

As a board with a national perspective, our objective is to increase the number of individuals and organizations who believe in the value of preserving the legacy of health care in Canada. We endorse the role of the Museum of Health Care in achieving that goal.

Why is the legacy of health care important?

Canadians must become more knowledgeable about health and health care if they are going to make informed decisions concerning their personal health and health care policies for our society. Citizens must understand the history of health care and the consequences for tomorrow of decisions made today.

“History gives perspective to the present and insight into the future”.

The quest to understand causes of diseases and treatment extends back beyond recorded history. History helps us understand social attitudes and beliefs that have influenced health and health care through the ages. It provides a foundation for understanding modern prevention and treatment of illness and political influences on health care policies.

War, religion, governments, individuals, science and technology, improved communications and chance are all factors that have affected health and health care. Sometimes these factors delay progress, sometimes they speed it up.

“Much to learn from past accomplishments ... and mistakes.”

Valuable lessons will be lost unless the history of health care is actively collected and preserved for the benefit of all Canadians.

History of health care is important to students and practitioners in health care disciplines as well as to the public. By learning to think historically, health science students and practitioners enhance their clinical skills. History contributes to our ability to use evidence, assess interpretations and analyze change and continuities. Only through history can we understand what elements of an institution, or a society, persist despite change.

Preservation of our Legacy

History is dependent on primary sources. Canada requires a network of resources to preserve our legacy and to enhance public understanding of health and health care. Such a network requires institutions to collect and preserve primary sources, archives and built heritage. A current crisis in Canada is the lack of institutions with skills and capacity to meet this need.

“Without collections, we have no material past.

No sense of who we were, are, or can be.”

A number of national, provincial, and institutional museums have health care artifacts. In most cases, however, health care is only one part of their mandate. What is missing in Canada are museums of health care where collection, preservation and research of primary sources and the use of these resources to enhance public understanding of the history of health care is the only mission.

The goal of the Museum of Health Care at Kingston is to be Canada's premier museum devoted exclusively to the story of health and health care and a centre of excellence for health care history.

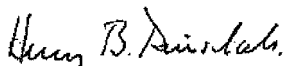
We look forward to the development of similar museums across our nation with a special interest related to the story of health

and health care in their region. This will allow us to share our resources, experience and talents.

The development of such facilities is severely restricted because of lack of commitment to and funding for the legacy of health care in Canada.



Lawrence Clein
Regina, Saskatchewan



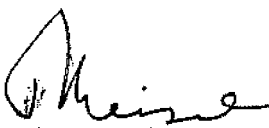
Henry Dinsdale *
Kingston, Ontario



George Goldsand
Edmonton, Alberta



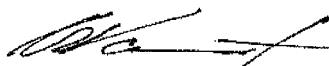
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Goderich, Ontario



John Meisel
Kingston, Ontario



Jock Murray
Halifax, Nova Scotia



Arnold Naimark
Winnipeg, Manitoba



Sarah Pri-chard
Chicago, Illinois



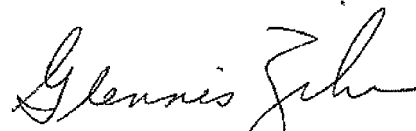
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Toronto, Ontario



Peter Warren
Winnipeg, Manitoba



Donald Wilson *
Orangeville, Ontario



Glennis Zilm
White Rock, BC

* co-chairs