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David Swann, MD, Leader of the Official Opposition

January 2009

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www.albertaliberalcaucus.com

What's On Your Mind?

Is there a provincial issue that's affecting you or your family? Write about it! The Alberta Liberal Caucus Chronicle welcomes reader submissions. Submissions may be edited for length or clarity.

Write us at:
Alberta Liberal Caucus Chronicle
2nd Floor, 9718 107 Street
Edmonton, AB T5K 1E4

Or email liberal.correspondence@assembly.ab.ca

Send Us Your Newsletter!

We'd love to see what your organization or community group is up to. If you have an e-newsletter, sign us up! Our email address is

liberal.correspondence@assembly.ab.ca

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Send us a note if you'd prefer not to receive this newsletter.

A Message from Dr. David Swann, New Leader of the Official Opposition

Dear Fellow Albertans,

I hope that each of you enjoyed a wonderful festive season. The holiday season always renews my spirit and my desire to help Alberta grow and change into a healthier, happier place, and I hope that you share that desire.

Many of you will have heard that in mid-December, I was chosen to take over the leadership of the Alberta Liberals and Alberta's Official Opposition. It's a role I accept with humility, gratitude, and determination to serve the people of this province effectively and with integrity.

This has been an exciting time for me, my family and the Official Opposition. I welcome you on the journey that we have begun together, and I thank you for your interest and support.

We all know that our biggest shared concern is the state of our economy and jobs, both here at home, in Canada at large, and abroad. It's the number one topic of conversation among most people I talk with.

The economic downturn is indeed a challenge – but I believe it is also an opportunity. The time is ripe for all Albertans to prepare for the next boom and begin investing in a more diverse, green economy. We need to make sure we are spending public money wisely – especially since Alberta spends 23% more than other provinces on average. Our government must spend smarter, focusing resources on areas that will build for the future, improve the quality of life of the greatest number of citizens, and protect the most vulnerable. Present and future generations will benefit from investments in green technology and arts and culture, to name just two examples.

I look forward to working with you as we continue to support one another in realizing a more caring and prosperous Alberta.

If you need assistance or would like to share your concerns, please write me at liberal.correspondence@assembly.ab.ca

David Swann, MD

January 2009



Public Health Care: A Doctor's View

As a family doctor and former medical officer of health, I know how important a strong publicly funded health care system is to Albertans.

Even though I've only been Leader of the Official Opposition for a few weeks, people from all over Alberta are already telling me that

they're worried about the future of our health care system. The specific questions they ask vary, but each boils down to the same essential worry: *will the health care system provide the care I need when I need it?*

Unfortunately, rather than improving our health system in any measurable way, Premier Stelmach and his government have only heightened anxieties. The government's costly and chaotic regional health restructuring (eliminating regional health boards, as well as AADAC, the Alberta Cancer Board, and the Alberta Mental Health Board) has already burdened Alberta with an additional \$1.3 billion in health care deficits, as well as sowing confusion and uncertainty among health care professionals across the province, some of whom have already left for other provinces – and if there's one thing this government can't afford to lose, it's doctors and nurses!

Shockingly, this radical gamble was undertaken without a cost-benefit analysis of any kind. And Health Minister Ron Liepert has said that we cannot expect to see improvements in the health care system for at least two or three years.

Albertans certainly agree with this assessment: citizens say they are not seeing improved services or a reduction in waiting lists. Rural Albertans in particular are worried, having seen the reports that hospitals in their communities may be closed or converted into

community health centres offering greatly reduced or no service in some areas.

Seniors are justly concerned by other government changes, which will end up costing citizens more money for health services such as assisted living and prescription drugs.

As a physician who supports universal access to needed medical services regardless of ability to pay, these developments concern me.

With the Alberta Legislature due to resume shortly, we in the Official Opposition plan to hold the government accountable on health care.

We need your help. Tell us your concerns. Share your experiences with the health care system and continuing care facilities. Let us know what tough questions we should be asking on your behalf.

Email us at

liberal.correspondence@assembly.ab.ca

Read our health care policies at

<http://alc.whitematter.ca/downloads/Accelerating Access 8 x 11 for web Swann.pdf>

and

<http://alc.whitematter.ca/downloads/ALO Creating a Healthy Future Policy.pdf>

Follow us in the Legislature at:

www.albertaliberalcaucus.com.

Take back your voice on health care.

David Swann, Leader
Alberta's Official Opposition



It's Time to Fight Back Against Gun Violence: Kent Hehr's Bill 201

Alberta Liberal MLA Kent Hehr (Calgary-Buffalo) will introduce his Bill 201 to the Legislature this spring. Kent's bill is aimed at reducing violent crime by giving police officers new powers to deal with gangs and gun violence.

But Bill 201 won't pass without your help. Visit Kent's site, www.bill201.com, and learn how you can help convince the government that this is an important bill that should become law.

Dr. David Swann on Political Revival

On January 22nd, Dr. David Swann visited the Southern Alberta Council on Public Affairs in Lethbridge. You can listen to Dr. Swann's speech and the engaging Q&A session that followed at these links:

<http://www.sacpa.ca/audio/090122.mp3>

<http://www.sacpa.ca/audio/090122QA.mp3>