



**Kirby report recognizes federal role in supporting health innovation,
says University Health Network President.**

For Immediate Release

(Toronto, Oct. 25, 2002) – The important contribution academic health science centres make in delivering innovative patient care, research and education was clearly acknowledged in today’s report from Senator Michael Kirby, says the president of Canada’s largest network of teaching hospitals.

“Senator Kirby has recognized that a major injection of federal investment into the infrastructures of teaching hospitals is required if they are to properly meet the access needs of Canadians while being innovative and competitive in the global marketplace,” said Tom Closson, President & Chief Executive Officer of University Health Network which includes Toronto General, Toronto Western and Princess Margaret Hospitals.

“The investment from the Federal Government would pave the way for state-of-the-art buildings, facilities and medical equipment as well as significantly increased research funding,” said Mr. Closson. “This would in turn foster a more internationally competitive research industry, more timely access for patients to care, treatment and diagnostic tests and an environment that would help to attract world-class clinicians and scientists.”

Mr. Closson said he was “thrilled” with the recommendation that Canada’s 16 academic health sciences centres be designated as national resources. He said teaching hospitals play a leadership role by implementing new technologies and by translating research into clinical practice and potential commercial opportunities. In addition, they train the country’s future healthcare professionals – a vital mandate especially in today’s age of severe health human resources shortages.

Among other highlights Mr. Closson noted was a commitment to increase the number of educational seats for medical, nursing and allied health professionals to help alleviate staff shortages and a proposed health care guarantee for patients to ensure they receive care and treatment within maximum waiting periods.

“Overall, the report is excellent,” said Mr. Closson. “It provides many concrete recommendations to address the sustainability of the Canadian healthcare system.”

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