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Health care policy in an aging Canada: The Alberta "experiment"

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Abstract

Tensions and contradictions abound in health care policy in Canada in the 1990s, with Canadian public health care, the envy of many observers throughout the world and the pride of Canadians, on the brink of destruction. Challenged by a number of forces, most notably public policy shifts, insistent rhetoric holds that drastic cuts are inevitable, that universal health care is a luxury no longer affordable and that the health care funding crunch is related to population aging and the large and looming demands for health care by the elderly. Realities, however, contrast with this rhetoric. Nowhere in Canada has health care undergone as radical a change as in the Province of Alberta in the period since 1993. In this article, health care policy changes in Alberta are examined as an "experiment" in Canadian health care restructuring using a socio-historical political economy approach, consistent with critical gerontology. Aging and the aged are found to be centrally involved and implicated in health care changes, but in ways different than

those predicted in Canada prior to contemporary health care restructuring.



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however, the atom reflects sensibility momentum.

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