



HEALTHCARE TAKES CENTRE STAGE AT THE FIFTH SEMI-ANNUAL MUNK DEBATE

*Howard Dean, William Frist, David Gratzer and Robert Bell to debate
the merits and pitfalls of Canadian and U.S. healthcare*

May 3, 2010 – The Aurea Foundation announced today the resolution and presenters for the fifth semi-annual Munk Debate to be held in Toronto on Monday, June 7th.

To encourage a far-ranging discussion of one of the key policy questions facing Canadians, the future of their healthcare system, the debate will have as its resolution: **be it resolved, I would rather get sick in the U.S. than Canada.**

The Debate will focus on the merits and demerits of the Canadian and American healthcare systems. For example: do ballooning healthcare spending, evermore expensive prescription drugs and an increased use of private medicine foreshadow the wholesale reform of Canada's universal, single-payer system? Or, are the divisive debates, social inequities, and sky-high expenditures associated with the U.S. experience with private medicine a validation of universal Medicare in Canada?

Arguing for the benefits of the Canadian healthcare system will be **Governor Howard Dean**, former Democratic National Committee Chairman, presidential candidate, six-term Governor of Vermont, and physician. Dean has been a leading advocate for universal healthcare coverage in the U.S. He will be joined by **Dr. Robert Bell**, President and CEO of University Health Network (UHN), Canada's largest research hospital. An internationally recognized Orthopaedic surgeon, Dr. Bell has over thirty years of experience delivering healthcare to Canadians.

Speaking in favour of the U.S. health system will be **Dr. William Frist**, former U.S. Senate Majority Leader, nationally recognized heart and lung transplant surgeon, and Professor of Business and Medicine at Vanderbilt University. He will be joined by **Dr. David Gratzer**, a licensed physician in the U.S. and Canada, senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, and author of *Code Blue: Reviving Canada's Health Care System*, winner of the Donner Prize for best book on Canadian public policy in 2000.

Rudyard Griffiths, the director and moderator of the Munk Debates, comments: "In the space of a few months we've seen major healthcare reform enacted in the U.S., user fees floated in Quebec, and debate growing in English Canada about the sustainability of a single-payer system in an era of rising government debt. All of

(over...)

these changes have prompted more and more Canadians to ask: what is the future of our healthcare system? Our debate will provide some compelling answers.”

In an era where political spin and public grandstanding are fast displacing serious discussion about the challenges facing Canada and the world, the Munk Debates provide a lively and substantive forum for leading thinkers to discuss the pressing issues of our time. Two debates are held each year in Toronto, one in the spring and one in the fall. The previous debate took place last December with Bjørn Lomborg, George Monbiot, Lord Nigel Lawson and Elizabeth May debating the virtues and pitfalls of climate change policy in front of a sold out audience of 1,200 people.

The Munk Debates is a signature initiative of the Aurea Foundation, a charitable organization established in 2006 by Peter and Melanie Munk to support Canadian institutions involved in the study and development of public policy.

“Our philanthropy is aimed primarily at improving the quality and vitality of public debate in Canada,” said **Peter Munk**, speaking about the rationale for the Munk Debates. “Whether it is the support we provide to the Munk School for Global Studies at the University of Toronto or the creation of the Munk Debates through our Aurea Foundation, Melanie and I are committed to broadening public knowledge, education and informed discourse,” Mr. Munk added.

The Munk Debates are open to the public. The healthcare debate will take place on **Monday June 7th, 2010** at The Royal Conservatory – TELUS Centre for the Performing Arts, at 7:00 pm, with a free public reception to follow.

Tickets to the debate at the Royal Conservatory range from \$25 to \$75 each and can be purchased through the Royal Conservatory box office by phone at 416-408-0208 or online at performance.rcmusic.ca. Seating is limited.

For more information on the Munk Debates, including biographical notes for presenters appearing at the June debate and past debate proceedings, visit:

<http://www.munkdebates.com/media/>

Media Contact:

Sherry Naylor
MDG & Associates
for the Munk Debates

sherry@mdgassociates.com
(416) 368-8253