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OTTAWA, CANADA

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

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REMARKS BY THE FIRST LADY
AT PRESS AVAILABILITY
OTTAWA, CANADA

MRS. CLINTON: I think that health care reform and our efforts to improve our health care system in the United States will continue. I particularly wanted to see this childrens hospital because I'm a big supporter of childrens hospitals in the United States and Canada. And it's important to remember that if any child is sick, that child deserves to have the best possible care. And I want to do all I can to make sure every child gets that care.

Q: What do (inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: Everything that I know about the system -- is for me -- is very encouraging that there's a very impressive provision of health care to people on every level of society -- that the needs of children and adults are taken care of well. And so I'm certainly an admirer of what you've been able to achieve here in Canada.

Q: Do you think that what happened to Mr. Christopher last night might have an impact in terms of -- he got pretty good treatment pretty quickly in an ordinary outdoor emergency (inaudible).

MRS. CLINTON: Well I think there is the need for Americans to know more about what actually happens in the Canadian health care system. There has been a lot of misinformation that has been put out across the border so perhaps this will give the people a chance to know more of the facts about how the Canadian system operates.

Q: Why do you want us to meet with (inaudible).

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, Mrs. Chretien put together a group of women that I met with and we talked about a variety of subjects, not only health care. And it was very interesting.

Q: (inaudible)

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MRS. CLINTON: Well because I'm very concerned about how health care is delivered to people and particularly to children. The costs are going up all over the world and certainly in America and Canada. You've done a better job on that than we have but it's certainly a challenge for both of our countries. And there are ways for providing high quality health care that you have developed that we need to know more about. And there are some things in the United States that I think can be of benefit to Canada. So it's a trading of information all with the same goal which is to try to make sure quality health care is available for everyone.

Q: Is health care reform in the States dead? You have pioneered that initiative and it's run aground. Where does it go from here?

MRS. CLINTON: No I don't think it is. I think that we will be looking to see changes in the system and the President will be introducing some incremental changes that he believes will help people and make health care more affordable and higher quality. So we're going to continue to do what he set out to do which is to try to provide affordable quality health care to every American. We think Americans would benefit from that if we were able to bring it about.

Q: Is the example of Canada any use to you in health care reform in the United States?

MRS. CLINTON: Well I believe there are lessons that Americans can learn from the Canadian system. And I talked about a lot of those lessons during the two years that I worked actively on behalf of the health care plan. Our system is different so it would not be I believe possible or appropriate for us to just move to your system. But there are parts of your system and lessons you have learned that I think are relevant to the American experience.

Q: Could you give me an example of that?

MRS. CLINTON: Well the universal health care coverage for every person in the country is an important basic part of any health care system that expects to provide good health care at affordable costs -- which is something we tried to make clear in America that was very difficult. And that is that if everybody is in the health care system you will actually have a lower cost. And that was difficult for Americans to understand, which is why we have 40 million of our people uninsured. And that means that they are not eligible for government health care through our program for poor Americans. And they're not able to be insured. So we have 40 million that are left out of the system. That is

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not fair or good for them, but it also costs the rest of us money. So what you have done by providing a basic level of health care for every Canadian actually saves you money. So it's not just the right thing to do, it's economically the smart policy to take. That's what I hope Americans will understand eventually.

Q: (inaudible) on political advice because her husband says that he trusts her judgement and she has given her some advice and it seems to be working.

MRS. CLINTON: Well I think the Prime Minister's success speaks for itself on that. He takes good advice.

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