Involving Citizens in Health Care Reform

October 4, 2002 – Last winter, the Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada (the Romanow Commission) entered into a partnership with Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN), to undertake a series of day-long dialogue sessions with citizens across Canada. Facilitators used the "ChoiceWork" methodology developed by Viewpoint Learning Inc. For the first time ever in Canada, Viewpoint's innovative public dialogue methodology was used to challenge participants to educate themselves, confirm their values and assess the various trade-offs and "hard choices" in health care.

Twelve dialogues took place across the country, each involving about 40 citizens, who were randomly selected to provide a representative cross-section of the Canadian population. Three sessions were held in each of four regions: Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario and the West. Three were conducted in French and nine in English.

Working with four scenarios under active discussion in Canada today, along with additional information and data, participants created a vision of the health care system they hoped to see in 10 years time. The project uncovered the core values Canadians' bring to the debate over health care and the types of arguments and evidence that can cause these values to shift.

In late June, the Commission released the ***Report on Citizens' Dialogue on the Future of Health Care in Canada*****,** written by CPRN's President, Judith Maxwell, Karen Jackson, Barbara Legowski, and Viewpoint Learning's Steven Rosell and Daniel Yankelovich. That report is available on our Web site.

More recently, Judith Maxwell and the Director of CPRN's Health Network, Cathy Fooks have presented the results in a variety of public venues. Their presentation, ***The Citizens' Dialogue: Future of Health Care in Canada*** summarizes the process and its results as citizens worked through the difficult trade-offs and choices required to realize their vision for Canada's health care system.