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### FRENCH-LANGUAGE HEALTH FORUM

## **Statement by:**

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

Tuesday, February 26, 2008

#### THE SENATE

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[Translation]

#### FRENCH-LANGUAGE HEALTH FORUM

Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, the Rendez-vous Santé en français, which brought together over 400 participants from across the country, took place in Edmonton from February 13 to 16.

I would like to offer my hearty congratulations to the organizers for the success of this important event. I would also like to express my appreciation for the exceptional work of the Réseau Santé en français, the Société Santé en français, and the Consortium national de formation en santé. I applaud the members' efforts and their dedication to encouraging minority francophone communities to get involved in finding solutions to the major challenges they face.

I would like to draw to your attention the progress and significant results achieved over the past five years in the French-language health care file. Our communities and governments are more aware of the provision of health services in French. Long-term, innovative partnerships have been created. The provision of French-language health services has increased

considerably, and more health care graduates are coming out of francophone colleges and universities in minority situations. Across the country, people have been making a tremendous effort to improve health services in French.

Education was a priority for minority francophone communities in the 1980s and 1990s, and now, in this decade, health has become the priority. Nevertheless, the shortage of human resources in the health care sector is a serious problem that is having a negative impact on our communities. Several speakers at the forum emphasized this complex problem.

After five years of significant achievements, we have reached a turning point, a new development phase beginning in 2008. I know that the upcoming challenges will relate to strengthening existing networks, developing human resources, and improving the organization of French-language health services. Therefore, I truly hope that the renewed Action Plan for Official Languages will include a justified increase in health care funding.

I hope that all minority francophone communities will soon have access to a full range of quality health services in their own language.