

# Obama seeks health compromise

## LAST DITCH EFFORT

### President appeals to Republican opponents

REUTERS

WASHINGTON — U.S. President Barack Obama made a last-ditch effort yesterday to seek a compromise with opposition Republicans on overhauling health care, one day before he was due to make an announcement on the way forward.

In a letter to congressional leaders, Obama outlined possible areas of agreement with Republicans, who have called on him to scrap his ambitious effort to reform the \$2.5-trillion health-care system and adopt a more incremental, less costly approach.

After a White House health-care summit last week failed to win Republican converts, Obama and his fellow Democrats are expected to launch a final push for a health-care overhaul using a process known as reconciliation to move the measure through the Senate

without Republican support.

Obama said in the letter the "piecemeal reform" sought by Republicans was not the best way to reduce health insurance premiums and end the practice of excluding people with pre-existing health conditions.

"While we all believe that reform must be built around our existing private health insurance system, I believe that we must hold the insurance industry to clear rules, so they can't arbitrarily raise rates or reduce or eliminate coverage," he said.

The letter was addressed to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and the Republican leaders in both houses, Senator Mitch McConnell and Representative John Boehner.

Obama said he was open to Republican ideas for undercover probes of health-care providers who get federal money, to expanding health savings accounts and to providing more grants to study alternatives to medical malpractice lawsuits.

"I said throughout this process that I'd continue to draw on the best ideas from both parties, and I'm open to these proposals in that

spirit," the president said in his letter.

With almost no Republican votes, Democrats in the Senate and House approved bills last year to reshape health care by cutting costs, regulating insurers and expanding coverage to tens of millions of Americans who now lack it.

But efforts to merge the two measures and send a final version for Obama to sign into law collapsed in January after Democrats lost their crucial 60th seat in the 100-member Senate in a special election in Massachusetts.

Pelosi said Obama would soon propose a health-care bill "much smaller" than the bill passed by the House.

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said Obama would deliver a speech today on the way forward on health-care reform.

## Terror acts condemned

LONDON — A leading Muslim scholar in Britain issued a fatwa yesterday condemning terrorists and suicide bombers, saying they had no justification in the name of Islam.

Pakistan-born Dr. Tahir ul-Qadri said in a news conference there were no "ifs or buts" about terrorism.

He said he wanted to convey the message that acts of terrorism cut people off as true followers of Islam.

Qadri said his 600-page fatwa, or religious ruling, was an "absolute" condemnation of terrorism without "any excuses or pretexts."

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## Building the New MUHC — Together

# The MUHC and the community: a longstanding relationship

THE VISION AND DEDICATION OF OUR COMMUNITY LEADERS HAVE SHAPED THE FOUNDING HOSPITALS OF THE MCGILL UNIVERSITY HEALTH CENTRE (MUHC). As the Redevelopment Project gains momentum at the Glen, Lachine and Mountain campuses, the MUHC is keeping this tradition alive by strengthening ties with the communities it serves.

### Sharing Ideas to Create a Stronger Project

In defining its three hospital campuses, the MUHC not only sought the expertise of its vast pool of professionals in clinical care, research and teaching but it also reached out to the community to get a better sense of expectations and needs.

"It's important to understand the people we serve and those whose lives will be affected by the MUHC Redevelopment Project," notes the Hon. Arthur T. Porter, Director General and CEO of the MUHC. "We want to ensure that our campuses fit harmoniously into the urban fabric."

"After meeting around the same table with representatives of community groups from Côte-des-Neiges-Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, the Sud-Ouest Borough and Westmount, we realized that, despite each neighbourhood's

specific realities, we do share common concerns and above all a major goal: maximize the benefits of the MUHC's new home at the Glen Campus," stated Claude Lauzon, Director of the Corporation de développement économique et communautaire CDN-NDG.

This consensus led to the Inter-Neighbourhood Coalition, an alliance of nine organizations representing the three communities surrounding the Glen Campus, along with a partnership agreement signed with the MUHC in 2004. This cooperative exercise, a first for a Quebec teaching hospital, allows both parties to align their respective visions and enhance the project to ensure seamless neighbourhood integration.

Determined to be a good neighbour, the MUHC held a number of working meetings on such issues as traffic, the environment, economic development, architecture, and employment.



Community leaders meet at the crossroads of their respective neighbourhoods, the Glen Campus: Maureen Kiely, Westmount Municipal Association representative; Guy Biron, Vice-President Strategic Development, Regroupement économique du Sud-Ouest de Montréal; Johanne Emmanuel, Head of Public and Governmental Affairs, MUHC; and Claude Lauzon, Director General, Corporation de développement économique et communautaire CDN-NDG.



The MUHC is also supporting a McGill University-led research project subsidized by the Community-University Research Alliance (CURA), which is studying how the redevelopment project can foster community development. Pictured here are students presenting their class project on opportunities around the Glen Campus.

Collaboration with the coalition led to training programs for patient care attendants and assistant pharmacy technicians for potential employees in

the Sud-Ouest Borough — a beneficial partnership for both sector residents and the MUHC, which is facing a lack of qualified staff in these fields. This

specific initiative had a major impact on the lives of 60 people, who have returned to the job market thanks to these short, specialized training programs. The MUHC hired a number of these graduates, and is eager to repeat the experience.

### Involvement that reflects each community

The same kind of interaction exists with community groups around the Mountain Campus. Past discussions have centred on how to balance protecting the mountain and providing outstanding health care.

Further west on the island, the MUHC's commitment has taken on particular significance, as its social focus has become the driving force for maintaining services at the Lachine Hospital and the Camille-Lefebvre Pavilion. Within the New MUHC, these centres are being upgraded and transformed into the Lachine Campus as they continue to fulfill their mission to provide community care. Here again, a working committee composed of citizens and local organizations has ensured that the centre will become a seamless part of its surroundings.

By working hand-in-hand with residents and community groups, the MUHC has succeeded in creating positive and profitable relationships with its future neighbours. As Claude Lauzon added, "The entire community benefits from our partnership with the MUHC, and we are making tangible progress towards revitalizing the neighbourhood and improving residents' quality of life."

## The New MUHC: Transforming Health Care for Generations



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