Among OECD countries, Canada ranks second last for public funding of dental care. On March 22, 2022, the Canadian federal government announced the new Delivering for Canadians Now: A Supply and Confidence Agreement targeting lower-income Canadians. This Agreement anticipates dental coverage for Canadian children under 12 years of age (from households with a gross income of $90k or less) by the end of 2022 and expansion to cover individuals under 18 years-of-age, seniors, and persons with disabilities by 2023. Full implementation of the program is planned for the end of 2025 for all Canadians from households with an income of $90k or less.

This policy moment is unexpected but creates a significant window of opportunity to significantly expand public medicare. In this workshop Professor Flood presents a draft paper (cowritten with colleagues Allin, Marchildon, Lazin, Oliver, Quiñonez) exploring constitutional options the federal government has from which to launch public dentalcare (with an emphasis on the federal government’s spending power) and the advantages and disadvantages of different policy options.