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Peggy Sattler MPP

London West

Hon. Christine Elliott
Ministry of Health
5th Floor, 777 Bay St.
Toronto, ON M7A2J3

August 26, 2021

Dear Minister Elliott,

With less than a week until September 1, I am writing to once again convey the urgent concerns of thousands of London West constituents who are understandably alarmed about the potential loss of access to OHIP-funded eye care services. I share their deep anxiety, and call on you to negotiate without delay to save eye care in Ontario.

I recently had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Josephine Pepe, Board Vice President of the Ontario Association of Optometrists and owner of Old North Optometry in London. As you know, Ontario optometrists provide high-quality eye care services for their patients each and every day, yet are reimbursed less than any other province for insured optometry services.

Decades of chronic cuts to vision care in Ontario have resulted in public funding that is woefully inadequate in addressing the rising costs of delivering quality eye care services. Over the last 30 years, OHIP optometry fees have remained nearly stagnant while advances in technology and inflation have significantly increased optometrists' overhead costs. This has put financial strain on optometry clinics, which has been further exacerbated by the unprecedented challenges of COVID-19. As you know, Minister, I raised this concern with you earlier in the pandemic in my letter of July 31, 2020.

Unfortunately, despite the improved outcomes for patients as a result of investments in technological advancements, the Ontario government has chosen to ignore decades of underfunding and the increasing financial burden on optometry clinics. Now, the failure to engage in good faith discussions about a sustainable funding agreement has put routine eye care at risk.

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Minister, you are certainly aware that for vulnerable Londoners and Ontarians, loss of access to vital optometry services could not only lead to severe eye and vision complications, but would also increase the pressure on already stretched emergency and other health care services.

It is critical that your ministry collaborate meaningfully and in good faith with Ontario's optometrists. I urge you to act immediately to ensure vision care services remain available for all Ontarians, without any disruption in care.

This cannot wait, Minister. Ontarians require urgent action from your government on this critical issue. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Peggy Sattler, MPP
London West

- cc. Ontario Association of Optometrists
MPP France G elinas, Ontario NDP Health Critic
Dr Allan Bernardi Optometry
Dr. Bohnert, Dr. Hutchinson, Dr. Leis, Dr. Patil, Dr. Vecchio, Byron Optometry
Dr. Brokenshire, Dr. Fleming, Dr. Hurst, Dr. Maruscak, Dr. Millar, West London Optometry
Dr. Chevalier, Dr. Dodge, Dr. Schropp, Dr. Tewari, Old South Optometry
Dr. Coates, Dr. Rickert, Dr. White, Dr. Wilbee, Westmount Optometrists
Dr. Luu, Dr. Mcleod, Dr. Walden, FYidoctors - Sunningdale
Dr. Peterson, Optometry On Hyde Park
Dr. Rempel, Cummins Optical
Dr. Sharma, Gregory's Optical
Dr. Shathasivam, Natural Smiles Sight & Sounds