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April 1, 2016

The Honourable Jane Philpott
Minister of Health
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House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
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Dear Minister Philpott:

Twelve years ago today Canada's First Ministers signed a Health Accord reaffirming their continued commitment to the principles and criteria of the *Canada Health Act*; an *Act* established to ensure all medically necessary health care is publicly administered, comprehensive, accessible, portable, universal and delivered without user fees or extra billing. The First Ministers agreed to tie federal dollars to national standards with a view to decrease wait times. The federal government committed to a 6% escalating transfer for the duration of the Accord, and conversations on creating a national public drug plan began.

Two years ago today that Health Accord expired.

Today, I write to you on behalf of over 13,000 SEIU-West members who are deeply troubled by the number of violations of the *Canada Health Act* across the country, the decreased federal financial commitment beginning next year, and the lack of progress on a national public drug plan and a national seniors' plan.

Here in Saskatchewan, Bill 179 has led to the opening of private MRI clinics in our province and allows those who can pay to jump the queue ahead of others. Additionally, there is further discussion within the government regarding the privatization of CT scans. We are seriously concerned about these privatized services bleeding much needed resources away from our public system. The cure for our provincial and national system is to commit to a significant and dedicated investment within our public system to address crumbling infrastructure, longer wait-lists and the phenomenon of 'hallway medicine' that plagues us. We can and must invest in more front-line staffing resources in long-term care in order to provide dignity to our seniors and the most vulnerable in our society.

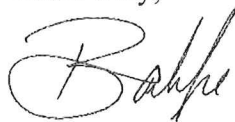
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I am writing today to urge you, the federal government, to uphold the Canadian values of health care based on need and not the ability to pay and enforce the *Canada Health Act*. I want you to ensure fair federal funding to the provinces and territories for the duration of a 10-year Accord and tie that funding to appropriate national standards. Canadians need you to lead the provinces and territories on the creation and implementation of a national public drug plan and a national seniors' care strategy.

It is up to the federal government to ensure that the provinces and territories are delivering health care in accordance with the principles enshrined in the *Canada Health Act*. We, the undersigned, call on you to ensure all people in Canada can access the health care they need regardless of their ability to pay, wherever they live in Canada.

We look forward to your response.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Barbara Cape', written in black ink.

Barbara Cape
President
SEIU-West

cc: All SEIU Canadian Presidents
Canada and Saskatchewan Health Coalitions
SEIU-West Executive Board Members & Staff