

Minister of Health



Ministre de la Santé

OCT 21 2016

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0K9



Ms. Barbara Cape
President
SEIU-West
200-747 46th Street West
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7L 6A1

Dear Ms. Cape:

Thank you for your letter of April 1, 2016, concerning Canada's health care system. I regret the delay in responding.

The Government of Canada recognizes that universal and publicly funded health care is a core Canadian value and a foundation for economic prosperity. This includes upholding the *Canada Health Act* and its fundamental tenet of providing access to medically necessary health care based on need; not on the ability to pay.

As a physician, I have seen firsthand many of the challenges confronting our health care system. With an aging population, increasing rates of chronic disease and cost pressures tied to new drugs and technologies, our system must adapt if it is to deliver better care and better outcomes at a cost that is affordable. I firmly believe that federal leadership is important to transforming Canada's health care system.

That is why the federal government committed to working with the provinces and territories toward the development of a new multi-year health accord, including a long-term funding agreement. A renewed partnership between the federal, provincial and territorial governments, with a focus on transformative action in key priority areas, such as home care, prescription drugs, mental health care and service delivery innovation, is essential to modernizing our health system.

In January, I met with my provincial and territorial counterparts to discuss the common challenges facing our health system and focus efforts on shared priorities. I was struck by the very positive spirit of collaboration among governments and the genuine desire to see the federal government involved as a partner in accelerating needed system change.

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Federal, provincial and territorial ministers agreed to work individually and collectively on the following immediate priorities, where efforts will yield the greatest impact:

- enhancing the affordability, accessibility, and appropriate use of prescription drugs;
- improving care in the community, home care and mental health care, to better meet the needs of patients closer to home and outside of institutional settings; and
- fostering innovation in health care services to spread and scale proven and promising approaches that improve the quality of care and value-for-money.

Work on these common priorities will continue in the coming months with the goal of concluding a new health accord. I am confident that, through collaborative leadership and partnership with the provinces and territories, we can make tangible progress in improving the efficiency and sustainability of our health care system, and achieve even better health outcomes for Canadians.

Again, thank you for writing on this important issue.

Yours sincerely,



The Honourable Jane Philpott, P.C., M.P.