



November 21, 2016

The Honourable Jane Philpott, MP  
Minister of Health  
Government of Canada  
Address Locator 0900C2  
Ottawa, QC K1A 0K9

Dear Minister Philpott:

Thank you for your reply of October 21, 2016, in response to my letter concerning Canada's health care system.

On behalf of SEIU-West members who work in our provincial health care system in Saskatchewan, I appreciate that you recognize the universality of our publicly funded, *publicly delivered* health care system as a core Canadian value. We share this value.

Since the receipt of your letter in October, I am aware of federal meetings with the various provincial ministers of health and the mixed reaction to the targeted initiatives that you have outlined in your letter. However, what I am particularly interested in is your reference to "...a focus on transformative action in key priority areas...and service delivery innovation".

What do you mean by 'transformative action'? Here in Saskatchewan, our Ministry of Health has embarked on a process they are calling 'transformational change', but thus far, it has no real definition. Instead, it appears to be a 'feel good' term that is merely an excuse to enact layoffs within our health system and merge or reduce the number of regional health authorities in an effort to reduce costs on the provincial budget. As a health care practitioner yourself, I know that you will recognize the impact this has on the ability to provide skilled quality care, when health care workers of all classifications are already working short and literally running to provide the basic care.

I also wonder what you mean by 'service delivery innovation'. Is this a reference to providing an opportunity for private, for-profit companies to begin their incursion into a two-tiered health care model? What are some of the ideas that your ministry has begun looking at for such 'service delivery innovation'?

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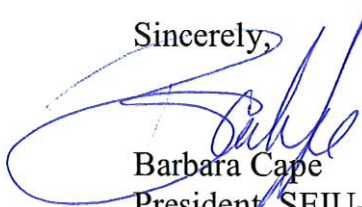
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In any of these discussions about transformation or innovation, I would strongly encourage you to reach out to the stakeholders who not only provide health care services, but who also receive health care services. The expertise of front-line health care workers cannot and should not be ignored or dismissed in looking to improve our national health care system. Indeed, SEIU-West embraces the ideology of a *health care team*, which includes everyone from support services, to doctors, to nurses of all stripes, to administration. While I appreciate and respect the role of career politicians in managing the legislative framework around health care services, you and I both know that as people who work within health care, there needs to be innovation in how we engage that expertise to improve our health system.

In closing, we join many others across Canada calling on both the federal and provincial governments to renegotiate the Canada Health Accord. Holding fast to the previous mandate of the Conservative government regarding the reduction in federal transfer payments for health care is a dangerous and destructive path. We cannot continue to extoll the virtues of Canada's Medicare system as being the jewel in the crown system, while at the same time, defunding it to the point of catastrophic collapse.

I look forward to your reply and thank you again for your previous response. Should you be travelling to Saskatchewan in the future, I would be more than happy to meet with you and a few of our health care members to share their perspectives with you.

Sincerely,



Barbara Cape  
President, SEIU-West

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cc: Sharleen Stewart, Vice-President for Canada, SEIU International  
Danielle Legault, Vice-President for QC, SEIU International