

Minister of Health



Ministre de la Santé

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0K9

DEC 18 2009

The Right Reverend Harvey A. Self
Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada
50 Wynford Drive
Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7

Dear Mr. Self:

Thank you for your correspondence of November 11, 2009, concerning home care and a national catastrophic drug coverage plan.

Our government recognizes the importance of home care services in meeting the needs of Canadians. Through the Canada Health Transfer (CHT), the federal government provides substantial, stable and predictable funding to the provinces and territories in support of health services. The CHT gives the provinces and territories the flexibility to set their own health priorities, including home care. Funding provided by the CHT is legislated to grow by six percent per year to reach \$24 billion in 2009-2010 and over \$30 billion in 2013-2014.

The *Canada Health Act* sets out the criteria and conditions that the provincial and territorial health insurance plans must meet to qualify for the full federal contribution under the CHT. The Act defines insured health services as all medically necessary hospital and physician services and extended health care services as certain aspects of long-term residential care, such as nursing home intermediate care and adult residential care services, and the health aspects of home care and ambulatory care services. However, unlike insured hospital and physician services, extended health care services are not subject to the Act's criteria, such as universality, comprehensiveness, and accessibility.

Although the responsibility to develop, implement, and organize health care services rests with the provinces and territories, I can assure you that all jurisdictions continue to work toward improving home care services.

The federal government recognizes the importance of affordable access to drugs for a quality health care system that is sustainable and meets the needs of all Canadians. The Government of Canada committed to working with the provinces and territories on the

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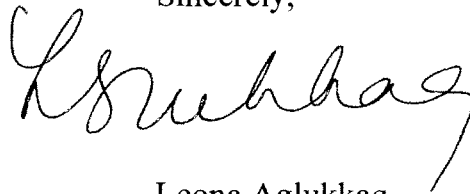
National Pharmaceuticals Strategy (NPS). The NPS included elements on drug access, affordability, and on their safe and effective use. More information about the NPS is available at <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hcs-sss/pharma/nps-snpp/index-eng.php>.

Although many Canadians have access to insurance for prescription drugs, I am aware that some individuals and families face high prescription drug expenses. The NPS targets issues such as affordable access, pricing, safety, and effectiveness. The Strategy aims to improve Canadians' drug-related health outcomes while ensuring the ongoing sustainability of the system.

The Government remains committed to working with the provinces and territories to realize efficiencies in the health care system and across jurisdictions so that public resources can be used most effectively. However, since drug coverage is primarily a provincial and territorial responsibility, you may wish to share your concerns with the provincial/territorial ministers of health. A list is enclosed for your information.

Thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leona Aglukkaq', written in a cursive style.

Leona Aglukkaq

Enclosure

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