

January 23, 2009

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Health
70 Colombine Driveway
Tunney's Pasture
Ottawa, ON K1A 0K9

Dear Minister:

In October, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce concluded its 79th Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Quebec City. One of the highlights of Chamber's AGM is the Policy Session. It is during the Policy Session that resolutions submitted by local chambers of commerce and boards of trade from across the country are debated and voted on by accredited delegates. Once approved, these resolutions become the policy position of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce for three years. This year our delegates issued a clear and decisive national policy mandate that we intend to pursue vigorously with the federal government over the coming months.


Our renewed national policy mandate includes an issue that falls within your portfolio.

Defining Sustainable Universal Publicly Funded Health Care for all Canadians in This Time of Healthcare Reform: True reform of the Canadian healthcare system requires re-negotiation of the Canada Health Act (CHA). The Canadian Chamber recommends that the federal government work with provincial and territorial governments to support patient-focused funding; and that the delivery of publicly-funded services be opened to private, regulated, health provider competition and innovation with the expectation that all regulated healthcare providers work within the scope and practice standards of their specific regulating body.

Biopharmaceuticals – Healthcare as an Economic and Competitiveness Driver: Canada must re-establish itself as a favourable destination for research and development investments in order to remain competitive in a knowledge-based economy. Having a robust pharmaceutical industry results in better patient outcomes, job creation and a stronger economy overall. As part of an improved pharmaceutical policy, the government must address: better protection of intellectual property rights; improving the drug review and approval process; and allowing better access to drugs.

The full text of this resolution is attached and we would be pleased to discuss it with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Perrin Beatty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Perrin Beatty
President and CEO

cc: Colin Carrie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health
Morris Rosenberg, Deputy Minister, Health Canada

Attachment

Minister of Health



Ministre de la Santé

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0K9

JUN 05 2009

The Honourable Perrin Beatty
President and Chief Executive Officer
The Canadian Chamber of Commerce
420-360 Albert Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7X7

Dear Mr. Beatty:

Thank you for your correspondence of January 23, 2009, concerning the renewed national policy of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. I regret the delay in responding.

The Government of Canada is committed to the *Canada Health Act* and its principles. These relate to such matters as the comprehensiveness of insured services covered, reasonable access to insured services without an impediment by way of user charges, portability of benefits, public administration of the health insurance plans on a nonprofit basis, and the universality of population covered. Our government also strongly believes that access to the insured services of our publicly financed health care system must be based on need, not on the ability to pay. However, the Act does not preclude health care services from being delivered by privately run facilities or privately funded providers, as long as insured persons are not charged for health services that are covered by the provincial and territorial health insurance plan. There are many innovations that can occur within the publicly funded health care system that are consistent with the requirements of the Act.

As a former federal Minister of Health, you will recall that the provincial and territorial health insurance plans, in consultation with their respective physician colleges or groups, are responsible for determining which services are medically necessary for health insurance purposes. For services that are outside the scope of the Act, such as home health care support services and prescription drugs, coverage is at the discretion of the individual provinces and territories, on their own terms and conditions. Similarly, since the provincial and territorial governments, rather than the federal government, have primary responsibility for matters related to the administration and delivery of health care

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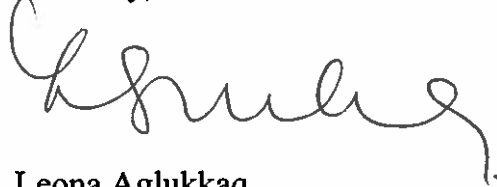
services and the regulation and management of health human resources, I would encourage you to make the health-related resolutions of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce known to provincial and territorial health ministers. A list is enclosed for your information.

Our government continues to seek ways to work with the provinces and territories to improve access to a quality health care system, including pharmaceuticals, that is sustainable and meets the needs of all Canadians. At the same time Canada recognizes the importance of maintaining a favourable environment for business, including the pharmaceutical industry. According to a 2006 KPMG study on international business costs, Canada has a robust intellectual property regime, an extremely generous research and development environment, and the lowest business cost in the world for the pharmaceutical and biotech sectors.

With respect to your specific concerns about the Common Drug Review and the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board (PMPRB), the Government would like to reiterate its support for these two agencies. In light of ongoing concerns about the sustained ability of Canada's health care system, and the fact that drug expenditures are the fastest growing component of overall health costs, the PMPRB's work remains both relevant and important. Similarly, the Common Drug Review, which assists governments with decisions regarding drug coverage, remains a key part of the drug decision-making process. The federal government is committed to working with participating provinces and territories to ensure that the Common Drug Review continues to play a valuable role in the health care system, and remains mindful of the advice provided by the Standing Committee on Health in this context.

Thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

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

Leona Aglukkaq

Enclosure

PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL MINISTERS OF HEALTH - April 16, 2009

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Alberta

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Saskatchewan

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Manitoba

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Ontario

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Quebec

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Government of Quebec
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Nova Scotia

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Prince Edward Island

Minister of Health and Minister of Social Services
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Province of Prince Edward Island
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Newfoundland and Labrador

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Northwest Territories

Minister of Health and Social Services
Minister Responsible for Seniors, the
Homeless and Persons with Disabilities
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
Government of the Northwest Territories
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Nunavut

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Minister Responsible for the Utility Rates Review
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Yukon

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