

March 11, 2016

The Honourable Jane Philpott
Minister of Health
70 Colombine Driveway
Tunney's Pasture
Postal Location: 0906C
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K9

Honourable Minister,

On behalf of Action Hepatitis Canada, please allow me to welcome you to this role. We are happy to see in your first 100 days your commitment to improving health care for Canadians through collaboration with the provinces and territories.

Hepatitis C is one of the top public health concerns in Canada, and one of the most burdensome infectious diseases in Canada. However it is also a well-understood virus. It is preventable and thanks to new treatments, it is now curable. These new treatments along with our knowledge about successful prevention practices make it possible to envision eliminating this life-threatening virus in Canada.

Many countries around the world have responded to the discovery of a cure for HCV by putting plans in place to prevent, diagnose and treat people living with the virus. So far, Canada's efforts have been minimal. The prevalence of advanced liver disease as a result of HCV continues to rise in Canada as does the prevalence of new cases of HCV.

On behalf of more than 250,000 Canadians affected by hepatitis C, we advocate for an improved response to – and the elimination of – hepatitis C in Canada. This will require federal leadership on a coordinated strategy. The federal government is an essential partner in improving outcomes and quality of care for Canadians. With strong federal leadership and collaboration with the provinces, through our excellent health infrastructure, Canada can emerge as a world leader in eliminating this life-threatening disease.

It would be our pleasure to discuss HCV, treatment and the barriers preventing the elimination of this disease in Canada with you and your staff. Please find enclosed in this package our position statement on the need for a national strategy. I have included as well our position statement on the pricing of hepatitis C medicines in Canada, as our research shows that inflated pricing remains the root cause of

many barriers to treatment access. We look forward to working with the new government in any way that we can be of assistance in improving Canada's response to hepatitis.

Sincerely,



Patricia Bacon

Chair, Action Hepatitis Canada

***Action Hepatitis Canada** is a national coalition of organizations responding to hepatitis B and C. Our work engages government, policy makers, and civil society across Canada to promote hepatitis B and C **prevention**, improve access to care and **treatment**, increase knowledge and innovation, create public health **awareness**, build health-professional capacity, and **support** community-based groups and initiatives.*