

January 14, 2016

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

Honourable Minister,

I am writing to request your support for the upcoming draft global health sector strategy on viral hepatitis, 2016 - 2021, and the specific targets included, which is to be discussed at the forthcoming WHO Executive Board meeting at the end of January.

Viral hepatitis is the seventh leading cause of death globally, accounting for 1.4 million deaths per year. In Canada, hundreds of thousands of people are living with viral hepatitis, with hundreds of deaths each year.

By 2030, globally, 20 million are expected to die from hepatitis B and the number of people living with hepatitis C is increasing, despite the discovery of an effective cure. A stepped-up national and global response can no longer be delayed.

Along with the World Hepatitis Alliance and the other 224 hepatitis member organizations worldwide, we strongly support the elimination goal and all of the targets outlined in the strategy. In particular, we believe it is essential that all Member States support the viral hepatitis B and C 90% diagnosis by 2030 target. In 2015, less than 5% were diagnosed.

Only through Member States showing their support is there any chance that the necessary resources will be made available, both inside WHO and, critically, from global donors. If you are attending the Executive Board meeting, we urge you to support the targets and the draft strategy and push for its adoption during the 69th World Health Assembly in May.

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.*