

January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012

Hon. Deb Matthews  
Minister of Health and Long Term Care  
Hepburn Block  
10th Flr  
80 Grosvenor St  
Toronto ON M7A2C4

Dear Honourable Minister Matthews,

We are writing to you on an urgent matter: *Access to primary health care for First Nations, Metis and Inuit Ontarians and the underfunding of Aboriginal Health Access Centres (AHACs).*

The Association of Ontario Health Centres (AOHC) has been advocating for the equalization of funding for AHACs with CHCs since 2004. We were hopeful that with the transition of the AHACs to the MOHLTC effective April 2011, that this would finally be realized. However, after a consolidation and small adjustment to their budgets no further adjustments were received. Promises were made to fully fund physician compensation and to review their base budgets in a timely manner. There have been lots of nice words of intention but no substantial progress.

This summer the CHCs received a 1.5% increase to their base budgets for 2011/12 and once again, the AHACs did not receive this stabilization funding increase - thus falling further behind again.

In your speech to the Ontario Hospital Association in November 9<sup>th</sup> 2011, you stated that health care spending would be slowed down and that priorities would need to be set. You stated that funding would need to be shifted to the community.

The poor health of the Aboriginal population in Ontario is well documented and we know that we do not need to tell you, that especially in these tough economic times, access to primary health care for the First Nations, Inuit and Metis populations in Ontario need to be one of your Government's priorities; and AHACs are one of the Government's key vehicles to deliver this care in an effective and culturally safe manner.

At the November 2011, AHAC/CHC Network meeting, the CHC Executive Directors, passed a unanimous motion calling on the AOHC to advocate for the equalization of funding for AHACs as a priority above other needs. At the December AOHC Board meeting a similar motion was passed.

Therefore the AOHC Board is urging the Minister to establish primary health care funding for First Nation, Metis and Inuit as a priority.

Specifically we request that the MOHLTC:

1. Immediately provide the AHACs with the same 1.5% base budget increase for 2011/12 that the CHCs received.
2. Immediately fully fund the physician compensation as a separate envelop thereby freeing up funds for other operational and staffing pressures.
3. Conduct a full budget review to ensure equitable funding with CHCs by April 1<sup>st</sup> 2012.
4. Develop a long-term Primary Health Care strategy to ensure all First Nations, Metis and Inuit Ontarians have access to the primary health care that they need.

We look forward to hearing a positive response from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Jocelyne Maxwell  
President, Association of Ontario Health Centres  
On behalf of the Association of Ontario Health Centres

CC: Hon. Dwight Duncan, Minister of Finance and Chair of Treasury Board  
Tim Shortill, Chief of Staff  
Hon. Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs  
Guy Bethell, Chief of Staff  
Chris Carson, Chief of Staff, Minister of Health and Long Term Care  
Susan Fitzpatrick, Assistant Deputy Minister - Negotiations and  
Accountability Management Division  
David W. Clarke, Director (Acting) - Negotiations and Accountability  
Management Division  
AOHC Board  
AHAC EDs  
CHC EDs  
Adrianna Tetley, Executive Director, AOHC