

House of Commons

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Charlie Angus

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Minister of Health Jane Philpott
Confederation Building Room 162
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario Canada K1A 0A6

October 11th 2016

RE: Discriminatory Health Care Policies Putting Patients at Risk

Dear Minister Philpott,

I have repeatedly raised Health Canada's discriminatory policies for Indigenous Peoples with you. Over 20 medical doctors in the Sioux Lookout region have written in the attached letters that your department's policies force them to provide sub-standard care placing their patients' health at risk. These doctors have now taken the unprecedented step to no longer follow these unacceptable policies enforced by your department. These allegations must be investigated. I am asking you as both the Health Minister and as a medical doctor to commit to a full investigation and change to these policies.

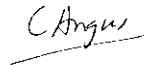
In the attached letters treating doctors have detailed your department's policies that delay and/or deny medically necessary treatments, travel, and medications. And they outline how these policies or provisions are not required in provincial systems. It is extremely distressing to read from treating doctors:

- The current method of drug approval needs to change immediately as it puts patient lives and health at risk.
- This is a denial of access to medically necessary care.
- The current process fetters access to medication as it is unduly lengthy and creates unnecessary delay in obtaining patient approval for a medication. The result is avoidable suffering for First Nations and Inuit people.
- The current system provides care that is demonstrably inferior to that provided to non-Indigenous populations by the Ontario provincial health care system.

The discriminatory policies of Health Canada continually interfere with the sanctity of the doctor-patient relationship in order to save the system money. We are hearing directly from medical doctors the systemic malpractice by your department. You must agree that as a doctor it is simply unacceptable for your department to retain a veto over the access to medicines and treatments that prescribing physicians deem as medically necessary for their patients. No Canadian would or should accept this situation and I am writing to ask whether as a medical doctor you would accept these policies for your patients? If not why should anyone else?

This government made a solemn commitment to build a new relationship with Indigenous people. This means putting an end the Band-Aid solutions. To this end, I am asking you to inform us as to when Indigenous Peoples across Canada can expect a firm commitment of resources to end this deplorable situation and a change to these unacceptable policies?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "C Angus". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Charlie Angus
MP Timmins-James Bay