

House of Commons

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Charlie Angus

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The Honourable Jane Philpott
Minister of Health
162 Confederation Building
House of Commons
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September 13 2016

RE: Systemic Denial of NIHB Orthodontic Care

Minister Philpott,

I am writing to follow up on the letter I wrote you on March 18, 2016 regarding the decision by your officials to deny medically necessary orthodontic care to a young Cree teen. I implored you not to follow the Harper government's tactic to fight this in court. At the time I was very hopeful that your government would follow through on its clear promise to stop fighting Indigenous children in court.

But I now learn that your officials have opted to follow the obstructive pattern of the previous Conservative government. What is even more disappointing is that your officials have spent more money fighting this young girl's case than would have been spent on providing her the medical service she requires. I am truly at a loss to understand the disconnect between the Prime Minister's positive words and the hardball tactics you are applying in denying medical services to children.

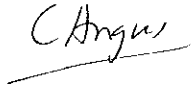
And the updated statistics provided by your department tell us that the denial of care in this young girl's case is no different from hundreds of other children who are denied care by this government. In 2014, the denial rates for the three levels of appeals pertaining to the NIHB orthodontics program were shockingly high with denials of 85% of first-level appeals, 90% of second-level appeals, and 100% of third-level appeals. In 2015-2016 the denial rates for the three levels of appeals pertaining to the NIHB orthodontics program somehow got worse with denials of 99% of first-level appeals, 99% of second-level appeals, and 100% of third-level appeals.

The NIHB program is fundamentally broken. It is not delivering patient-centred medically based care. The Human Rights Tribunal ordered an immediate end to discriminatory practices in health care. I have written to you on other occasions about serious cases of interference by your officials in denying access to

medically necessary treatments. And yet your officials continue to deny medical services. This has forced this family to seek legal remedies to obtain treatment.

Will you please explain the logic of spending more on lawyers than on medical treatments for children?

With greatest respect,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "C Angus". The signature is written in dark ink and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Charlie Angus
MP Timmins- James Bay