

April 27, 2016

The Honourable Dr. Terry Lake
Minister of Health and MLA for Kamloops-North Thompson
PO Box 9644 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC
V9W 9P1
E: hlth.minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Dr. Lake;

Re: Medical Services Plan of BC Premiums

We write on behalf of the Health Advocacy Committee of the BC Association of Social Workers asking that you consider changes to MSP premiums to reduce their burden on low-income families.

Attached you will find an analysis of Medical Services Plan premiums completed by one of our social work colleagues. The analysis points out the inequitable and punitive nature of MSP premiums, both in concept and in implementation.

We note the following specific concerns with the way MSP premiums are currently administered and refer you to the attached analysis.

- Income threshold must be indexed to inflation
- A progressive sliding scale must be used to establish premiums rather than the current large income categories
- The low income cut off for paying any premium must be established at \$30,000
- The premium assistance program must be responsive to reductions in income as they occur, rather than a year later

The above changes would ensure that low-income families and individuals do not pay more than their fair share of healthcare costs. They would also better align British Columbia with practices in other provinces and with the principles of Medicare. The reform of MSP premiums presents an opportunity for your government to make immediate reforms to better support families.

We urge you to take these steps immediately and, recognizing that MSP Premiums continue to function as a regressive tax, we further ask that you consider fully integrating MSP premiums into a progressive income tax system.

Sincerely,



Fiona Lewis, RSW
Chair, BCASW Health Advocacy Committee



Michael Crawford, RSW
President, BC Association of Social Workers

- CC. Hon. Christy Clark, Premier and President of Executive Council, & MLA for Westside-Kelowna
Linda Larson, Chair, Select Standing Committee on Health, & MLA for Boundary-Similkameen
Ms. Judy Darcy, Deputy Chair, Select Standing Committee on Health, Opposition spokesperson for Health, & MLA for New Westminster

Hon. Christy Clark
Premier and President of Executive Council, & MLA for Westside-Kelowna
West Annex, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC
V8V 1X4
E: premier@gov.bc.ca

Ms. Linda Larson
Chair, Select Standing Committee on Health, & MLA for Boundary-Similkameen
Room 243, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC
V8V 1X4
E: linda.larson.MLA@leg.bc.ca

Ms. Judy Darcy
Deputy Chair, Select Standing Committee on Health, Opposition spokesperson for Health, & MLA for New Westminster
Room 201, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC
V8V 1X4
E: judy.darcy.MLA@leg.bc.ca