



December 1, 2015

The Honourable Dr. Jane Philpott
Minister of Health
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Philpott,

On behalf of the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW), I would like to extend our sincere congratulations on your recent election and appointment as Minister of Health.

As background for you, for 89 years CASW has been the national association voice for social work in Canada with the dual mission of strengthening the profession and advancing issues of social justice. To this end, CASW is very optimistic that your government will deliver on the platform promise of real change

CASW is a very supportive of your government's commitment to return to cooperative federalism, especially as it pertains to the delivery of equitable health and social services across Canada. From our perspective, returning national leadership to our federation is paramount if Canada is to reduce the growing inequality gap and comprehensively address [social, economic and health equity](#).

In tandem with the commitment of a new Health Accord and renewed commitment to national leadership, CASW proposes that your government boldly adopt a new [Social Care Act for Canada](#), to help guide the Canada Social Transfer and all new investments in social infrastructure that address the social determinants of health.

Like the Canada Health Act, CASW proposes that a *Social Care Act* be grounded in 10 principles that would not impose restrictions or regulations on the provinces and territories, but rather act as a social policy lens or framework to support the delivery of equitable services to all populations across Canada. The Canadian health care system stands to save significantly by adopting a bold vision to address the social determinants of health as the best research available clearly demonstrates that health, social and economic outcomes are inextricably linked.

In the past decade, CASW has made advocating for seniors a priority. Consequently, CASW deeply values the commitment to increase the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) for single low-income seniors by 10%, as it serves as a step forward in supporting our most vulnerable seniors, predominantly women, out of poverty. The commitment to restore the eligibility age for Old Age Security (OAS) and the GIS is also valued and appreciated.

As a Co-Chair with the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) of the *Alliance for a National Seniors Strategy* (demandaplan.ca), CASW is fully supportive of your government's commitment to meet with the provinces and territories to develop a plan to fund a gradual enhancement of the Canada Pension Plan (CPP). Further, CASW acknowledges the significance of your immediate commitment to invest \$3 billion, over the next four years, to deliver more and better home care services for all Canadians.

CASW encourages your government to use your commitments and investments in seniors as opportunity to seize leadership and build a comprehensive national seniors' strategy in cooperation with the provinces and territories. To this end, CASW is a strong proponent of a national review of all current economic benefits for seniors, with the goal of developing a targeted Guaranteed Annual Income that will truly allow for seniors in Canada to live and die with dignity and respect.

Finally, specific to our profession, each March is designated as National Social Work Month – a time for social workers gather to celebrate the profession and focus our advocacy efforts in support of real social change. In this regard, please accept this letter as a request to meet, preferably in March, however at your convenience, to further discuss our shared priorities in building a healthier and more equitable Canada.

Again, on behalf of the CASW federation, I extend our sincere congratulations on your election and subsequent appointment as Minister of Health.

Sincerely,



Morel Caissie, MSW, RSW
President, CASW

cc. CASW Federation