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April 10, 2012

Honourable Christy Clark
Premier of British Columbia
Chair - Council of the Federation
PO Box 9041
Station Provincial Government
Victoria, BC
V8W 9E1

Honourable Darrell Dexter
Premier of Nova Scotia
Vice-Chair - Council of the Federation
PO Box 726
Halifax, NS
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Dear Premier Clark and Premier Dexter,

At the last meeting of the Council of the Federation, the Premiers made health care renewal a priority with the establishment of the *Health Care Innovation Working Group* composed of all provincial and territorial health ministers and co-chaired by Premier Robert Ghiz and Premier Brad Wall.

The purpose of this letter is to request, on behalf of social workers from across Canada, that the Canada Social Transfer be given equal consideration and commitment by Council of the Federation.

As you are well aware, the Canada Social Transfer is the primary source of federal funding in Canada that supports provincial and territorial social programs. The Canada Social Transfer funds many programs that are important to maintaining a good quality of life for all Canadians.

At present, the Canada Social Transfer is inarguably a largely unconditional transfer which has no accountability measures for ensuring a level of adequacy with respect to social programs across Canada. In fact, the only national standard with respect to social service delivery is that there is no minimum residency period required before persons are eligible to receive social assistance.

As highlighted in CASW's recent report entitled, Canada Social Transfer Project -Accountability Matters, the current model of financing social programs through the Canada Social Transfer has many issues associated with it, the most prominent being a crisis of accountability.

CASW is supportive of the collaborative approach to healthcare accountability that the Council of the Federation has undertaken with the establishment of the *Health Care Innovation Working Group*. However, we would argue that accountability to the Canada Social Transfer funding has the potential to have as much, if not greater implications for the overall health and well-being of Canadians than the Canada Health Transfer that has dominated provincial and national discussions to this point.

The social determinants of health encompass a broad range of social factors, including socio-economic status, early childhood education, and access to adequate housing, to name a few. Moreover, income inequality is highly associated with the health of a nation.

CASW is respectfully requesting that the Council of the Federation establish a *Social Transfer Accountability Working Group* that would provide, the vital guidance and national leadership required to establish common principles of accountability for the receipt and delivery of social services from the Canada Social Transfer.

Research in recent years has made clear that even modest investments in the broad social determinants of health exert a direct impact on reducing the major cost drivers behind the delivery of expensive acute healthcare to Canadians.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue in looking to the future of both healthcare and social services in Canada.

Yours sincerely,



Morel Caissie, MSW, RSW
President, Canadian Association of Social Workers

cc. The Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada
Hon. Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health
Ms. Libby Davies, NDP Health Critic
Hon. Hedy Fry, Liberal Health Critic
M. André Bellavance, Bloc Critic Santé
Hon. Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development
Ms. Jean Crowder, NDP Critic (HRDC)
Mr. Rodger Cuzner, Liberal Critic (HRDC)
M. Jean-Francois Fortin, Bloc Critic (RHDC)
Hon. James Michael (Jim) Flaherty, Minister of Finance
Peter Julian, NDP Finance Critic
Hon. Scott Brison, Liberal Finance Critic
M. Daniel Paillé, Bloc critic des finances
Hon. Alison Redford, Premier of Alberta
Hon. Greg Selinger, Premier of Manitoba
Hon. Kathy Dunderdale, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador
Hon. David Alward, Premier of New Brunswick
Hon. Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario
Hon. Robert Ghiz, Premier of Prince Edward Island
Hon. Jean Charest, Premier of Québec
Hon. Brad Wall, Premier of Saskatchewan
Hon. Bob McLeod, Premier of the Northwest Territories
Hon. Darrell Pasloski, Premier of Yukon
Hon. Ronald Liepert, Alberta Minister of Finance
Hon. Kevin Falcon, British Columbia Minister of Finance
Hon. Stan Struthers, Manitoba Minister of Finance
Hon. Tom Marshal, Newfoundland Minister of Finance
Hon. Blaine Higgs, New Brunswick Minister of Finance
Hon. Graham Steele, Nova Scotia Minister of Finance
Hon. Dwight Duncan, Ontario Minister of Finance
Hon. Wesley Sheridan, Prince Edward Island Minister of Finance
M. Ramond Bachand, Ministre des Finance du Québec
Hon. Ken Krawetz, Saskatchewan Minister of Finance
Hon. J. Michael Miltenberger, Northwest Territories Minister of Finance
Hon. Keith Peterson, Nunavut Minister of Finance
Hon. Dave Hancock, Alberta Minister of Human Services
Hon. Stephanie Cadieux, British Columbia Minister of Social Development
Hon. Jennifer Howard, Manitoba Minister of Family Services and Labour
Hon. Susan Sullivan, Newfoundland Minister of health and Community Services
Hon. Sue Stultz, New Brunswick Minister of Social Development
Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse, Nova Scotia Minister of Community Services
Hon. John Milloy, Ontario Minister of Community Services
Hon. Valerie E. Docherty, Prince Edward Island Minister of Community Services
Dr. Yves Bolduc, Ministre de la Santé et des Services Sociaux
Hon. June Draude, Saskatchewan Minister of Social Services
Hon. Tom Beaulieu, Minister of health and Social Services
Hon. Keith Peterson, Nunavut Minister of Social Services