

April 20, 2020

Greetings Ms. Deb Schulte MP- Minister of Seniors,

RE: Call to Action - seniors support across Canada

The COVID 19 pandemic does not discriminate. We are all included, but the senior community has been the hardest hit. The Federal and Provincial governments have been providing daily updates on programs to address the economy and health initiatives are all good but the reaction to address the senior community involving Long Term Care and Home Care has only now touched a sense of some priority. Terms like low income, the disabled, most vulnerable, not only have definitions they are well represented in our senior community. Many seniors are struggling on low incomes based on GIS/ OAS payments. Disabled seniors have difficulties in caring for themselves and living in isolation. The deemed vulnerable could be viewed as a combination related to all of the mentioned. So what has changed under COVID-19?

First: The question of the protection of prescription drug supply. Seniors, many on 7-10 meds are now limited to a 30 day supply. They are facing additional cost with their 90 day supply cut, requiring additional trips to pharmacies, mounting dispensing costs as well as risking exposure to this highly infectious virus we all face. Has anyone truly justified such drastic impact on those living within marginal incomes?

Second: Accountable and proactive response for senior's health care providers. Those working in Long Term Care and Home Care were the last to receive more appropriate direction and supplies relating to protection, both for themselves and those being in their care. The national record of infections and death are indeed telling truths. The most vulnerable were last to be of concern for appropriate protocols.

Third: Hospitalized Seniors not having support to be discharged due to self isolation, remain in hospital beds or left to tragically die in fear without family or familiar comforts.

Mental health concerns also affect our citizens as isolation, anxiety or depression etc. can have devastating effect on persons who need prompt attention and funding for expanded services.

Yes, the recovering of the economy is important as well as the health initiatives for the general population but there is an obvious missed mark by governments. Although not well known, earlier, the N S Senior Advisory Council aka Group of IX, recently put forward information on these concerns of the senior community to government, similar to their position in 2016 when there was a major proposal in raising the fees on Pharmacare.

The intent of my letter today is to communicate to the decisions makers that the 'most vulnerable' is more than a used term. It must carry with it the voice of senior organizations when speaking on behalf of our community, whom should receive greater attention. Seniors organizations are built and strive to improve our lives and communicate resolves for such problems in our society, let's work together.

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/mandate-letters/2019/12/13/minister-seniors-mandate-letter>

Respectfully,

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CC:

Minister of Health

Minister of Finance

Minister of Families, Children and Social Development

Minister of National Revenue

Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry

And shadow cabinet ministers