



The Canadian  
Association of  
Optometrists



L'Association  
canadienne des  
optométristes



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CANADIAN  
MEDICAL  
ASSOCIATION

Jason Kenney, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Citizenship and Immigration  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 1L1

July 5, 2012

Dear Minister Kenney:

We are writing on behalf of eight national organizations representing various health and social services practitioners to acknowledge your department's clarification in policy that will allow some refugees to continue to receive health coverage under the Interim Federal Health Benefit. We welcome this change and think it is a step in the right direction.

As we have indicated in earlier correspondence, Canada has been a world leader in the development of evidence-based care guidelines for immigrants and refugees. Research has shown that even simple health care interventions have substantial benefits for newcomers.

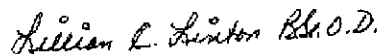
Under the IFHP, refugees to our country have had the opportunity to gain access to the care they need. Not only has this approach been compassionate, it is also cost effective. In fact, we think the changes to the IFHP effective June 30 will compromise access to needed health care and force health care providers to refer refugee patients to emergency departments – this will certainly undermine our health care system, increase wait times for all Canadians and be more costly for provincial governments.

To ensure the health and well-being of our society's most vulnerable populations, and in line with our country's principles of compassion and inclusiveness, we urge your further

reconsideration to ensure that the Interim Federal Health Benefit continues to provide extended health coverage for all refugees. Just as hardships and health issues do not distinguish between sub-categories of refugees, neither should the program.

Again, we would be pleased to work with officials to examine ways in which services for refugee claimants could be delivered more efficiently and effectively, as well as to discuss how we can ensure that all Canadians get access to the highest standard of health and health care.

Sincerely,



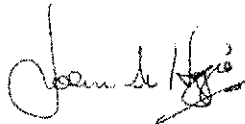
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