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From: pcpe-cslpcorr@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca <pcpe-cslpcorr@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca>

Sent: January 13, 2022 8:42 AM

Subject: Reply to your correspondence

Dear Extended Healthcare Professionals Coalition:

On behalf of the Honourable Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, I am responding to your letter of December 15, 2021. You wrote concerning the Government of Canada's commitment to expand Canada Student Loan (CSL) forgiveness to other professionals, beyond only doctors and nurses, in the health and social services sectors.

Strengthening primary health care in Canada's rural and remote communities was announced as a Government of Canada priority in 2011, when the Government proposed to combat the shortage of primary health care providers in rural communities by forgiving a portion of CSLs. As you point out, the need for health care professionals in rural and remote areas has only increased over the years, and this has only become more critical with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As such, loan forgiveness serves to provide a financial incentive to individuals repaying CSLs to move to underserved rural and remote areas to assist these communities with meeting their primary health care needs.

The Minister's mandate letter, released after you wrote, committed to expand both the amount of and eligibility for loan forgiveness in under-served rural or remote communities. Specifically, the Government has committed to expand the list of eligible professionals and undertake a review to ensure that rural and remote communities are fully eligible. The mandate letter did not specifically list the professions the Government intends to add to the list of professionals eligible for loan forgiveness.

As you may be aware, the Canada Student Financial Assistance (CSFA) Program is delivered in partnership with participating provinces and territories. In addition, the provinces and territories have jurisdiction over health, including health care workers. As such, the implementation of student aid measures, in particular those that pertain to health care providers in repayment, requires extensive consultation.

The Government of Canada recognizes the role of the professions represented by your organization, and the role that all health care professionals play in Canada's healthcare system. At this stage, we are just commencing our work to make this commitment a reality. We plan on extensive consultations with Canadians, stakeholder organizations such as yours, and other levels of government to ensure that the list of professions eligible for CSL forgiveness is representative of the professionals needed to improve access to health care and social services in rural and remote communities.

Thank you for taking the time to write. I look forward to our continued collaboration on this important issue as we work to implement this commitment. CSFA Program officials will be in contact with the Extended Healthcare Professionals Coalition soon to discuss further.

Yours sincerely,

Daniel Turner

Acting Director General

Canada Student Financial Assistance Program Learning Branch Employment and Social Development Canada

c.c. Office of the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, P.C., M.P.

Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health

Office of the Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Health

Office of the Honourable Patty Hajdu, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario

Office of the Honourable Karina Gould, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development

Office of the Honourable Seamus O'Regan Jr., P.C., M.P.
Minister of Labour

Office of the Honourable Dan Vandal, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency

Office of the Honourable Gudie Hutchings, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Rural Economic Development