



Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC

Representing seniors in British Columbia since 1950

www.coscobc.org

June 6, 2024

British Columbia Dental Association
400 - 1765 West 8th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6J 5C6

Dear BC Dentists:

Re: Oral health professionals and the Canadian Dental Care Plan

The Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations (COSCO) of BC is a non-profit, non-partisan, volunteer driven organization that has promoted the well-being of seniors since 1950, representing over 80,000 members from 75 affiliated seniors organizations across BC. COSCO advocates for policies that allow seniors to remain active, independent, and engaged in society. We write to you today about the new Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP).

The CDCP aims to assist Canadians without dental insurance, including many seniors, to access oral health care. As you are well aware, oral health is an essential component of overall good health. Untreated dental disease can lead to other serious medical conditions. It has been reported that 1 in 4 Canadians avoid seeing an oral health professional because they could not afford to pay for it.

Implementing a new program on such a large scale is not without complications, and the concerns of dentists regarding this program have been widely reported in the media. We are aware of the gradually increasing number of oral health professionals registered for the program and that the federal government has made efforts to simplify processes to encourage participation.

Given the strong benefits to seniors health, and especially for those facing many demands on their limited funds – 250,000 seniors in BC live on incomes of less than \$2,000 per month – COSCO strongly supports this program. After many decades of advocating for oral health care, we are now grateful to hear the stories of overjoyed seniors now able to access dental care that they otherwise would not have received.

We ask for your assistance by encouraging your membership to provide care to patients who are funded by the CDCP and to work with Health Canada on resolving the issues with implementation as they arise. We trust you will agree that to be a champion of improving oral health care for those who cannot afford it is a noble and worthwhile endeavor.

Yours sincerely

Leslie Gaudette
President

Louise Holland
Chair, Health Committee

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cc. Hon. Mark Holland, Federal Minister of Health
Hon. Seamus O'Regan, Federal Minister of Labour and Seniors
Hon. Adrian Dix, BC Minister of Health
Health Shadow Minister Shirley Bond
Sonia Furstenau, Leader, BC Green Party
John Rustad, Leader BC Conservative Party
Dan Levitt, BC Seniors Advocate

Dr. Stephen Ellis, Shadow Minister of Health, Conservative Party of Canada
MP Peter Julian, Health Critic for NDP
MP Rachel Blaney, Seniors Critic for NDP
MP Luc Thériault, Bloc Québécois, Santé
Andréanne Larouche, Bloc Québécois, Aînés
Elizabeth May, Leader, Green Party of BC